

## SINGAPORE AND AFTER

*LORD STRABOLGI HAS ALSO WRITTEN*

WILL CIVILIZATION CRASH?

FREEDOM OF THE SEAS (in collaboration with Sir George Young)

NEW WARS, NEW WEAPONS

THE REAL NAVY

INDIA: A WARNING

OUR DAILY PAY—THE ECONOMICS OF PLENTY

SAILORS, STATESMEN AND OTHERS

THE BATTLE OF THE RIVER PLATE

NARVIK—AND AFTER

THE CAMPAIGN IN THE LOW COUNTRIES

FROM GIBRALTAR TO SUZ



GENERAL SIR ARCHIBALD WAVELL

# Singapore and After

A STUDY OF THE  
PACIFIC CAMPAIGN

BY

LORD STRABOLGI, R.N.

WITH 70 ILLUSTRATIONS

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## CHAPTER I

### PROLOGUE

ON 7 December 1941, the Empire of Japan passed from covert to open war on the English-speaking world. It was the culminating action in a programme of conquest and aggression which had begun in 1894 with the Sino-Japanese war. The Chinese Empire was then in decay. The new China, which only sprang into life in the great revolution of 1911, had not begun to take shape.

There were other claimants to the estate of the dying Manchu dynasty. The European Powers forced a Japanese withdrawal. The Russians seized Port Arthur and the Kwantung peninsula; the British insisted on a lease of the port of Wei-hai-wei on the other side of the Gulf of Pohai; and the Germans, not to be outdone, made the convenient murder of two Lutheran missionaries the excuse for the annexation of Tsingtao and the good harbour of Kiao-chow adjoining it.

Though there was rivalry and latent hostility between Britain and Russia at the beginning of the present century the European Powers nevertheless acted in concert and a check was put temporarily to Japanese designs. The island of Formosa remained as the principal Japanese spoil. By 1904 Czarist Russia had acquired a dominating influence in Manchuria. The Government in Petersburg was preparing to extend this influence into the ancient Empire of Korea. The great peninsula of Korea had been marked out as a future sphere of conquest by the Japanese.

The Russian-Japanese war of 1904-5 was a conflict between the two rival Powers for predominance in these territories. Czardom was weakening as a system of government in Russia; there was revolutionary unrest on the Russian home front, and the Japanese gained early naval superiority by a surprise attack on the Russian battle-fleet in Port Arthur, while negotiations were in progress, and before there was any declaration of war. After much hard fighting the campaign ended in a limited Japanese victory. The only genuine Russian territory surrendered to Japan under the Treaty of Portsmouth was the southern half of the island of Sakhalin; which island is, geographically, a continuation of the Japanese archipelago. Port Arthur and its hinterland, leased from China by Russia, were surrendered to Japan; and there was a tacit agreement that Korea should now be her exclusive sphere of influence.

This was the first time since the Mongol invasions that an Asiatic nation had defeated a great European Power. The victory still further whetted Japan's appetite for expansion. It also had an unpleasant effect on the Japanese national character. Politeness and courtesy



changed to swagger and aggressiveness. The Japanese began to regard themselves as invincible and a superior race, destined to rule all Asia and eventually dominate the world. The Japanese have often been described as the Prussians of the East. It would be more accurate to describe them as the Asiatic forerunners of the Nazis. For a generation before anyone had heard of Hitler outside his father's village every Japanese school-teacher was drilling into his pupils the *Herrenvolk* doctrine. Certainly the Japanese now regarded themselves as the rightful heirs to the estate of the Chinese Emperors. The Chinese revolution, already referred to, gave a set-back to these ambitions. New heirs with a better legal claim had arrived.

In 1904 Britain and Japan had entered into an alliance. This was, on the British side, primarily the work of the late Marquis of Lansdowne. This inheritor of the Victorian tradition regarded Russia as the great menace to the British Empire in India, as did most of his British contemporaries. Failing to observe the rottenness of the Czarist system in the domestic field they were alarmed at the advance of the Russian Imperialists in Central Asia, towards the Himalayas, and in the Far East. The Anglo-Japanese alliance, in the eyes of these worthy Ministers was a reinsurance against Russia.

From the Japanese point of view it was equally useful as Britain held the ring clear during the Russo-Japanese war.

After some hesitation the Japanese Government of the day fulfilled the terms of the alliance and declared war on Germany in 1914. The Japanese navy did useful work in protecting convoys in the Pacific and a Japanese army laid leisurely and, finally, successful siege to the German fortress of Tsingtao. A Japanese flotilla of destroyers even came into the Eastern Mediterranean to assist in combating the submarine menace. The Japanese part in this war was otherwise limited. At the peace settlement Japan nevertheless obtained considerable booty.

Germany, coming later into the field as a Colonial Power, had managed to pick up some Pacific islands, and in the share-out the Marshall and Caroline group lying north of the Equator fell to Japan under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Before the war was over, Japan had taken advantage of the pre-occupation of her Allies to bring intensive pressure to bear on China, demanding, in effect, vast territorial and economic concessions. China at this time was an ally of Japan, for she had thrown in her lot with Britain and France. When the Western Allies joined by America had defeated Germany and her Allies, they were strong enough once more to check Japan's designs on her great neighbour. The Americans, in particular, reasserted the well-established policy of the 'open door' in China, and Japan abandoned her more blatant policy of force for one of intrigue and economic penetration.

The Treaties which nominally brought to an end the European war were rounded off by the Washington Naval Agreement resulting

from the 1921 Conference. The disappearance of German sea-power had unfortunately led to a curious naval rivalry between Britain and America. An economic depression followed the war of 1914-18, taxation was high, and there was a general disposition to avoid competition in naval shipbuilding. All the victors of that war and, in theory, the vanquished, were committed to the doctrine of a general and all-round reduction of armaments. It was a not unnatural reaction to the slaughter and misery of the World War. The broad result of this phase of international relationship, in which Britain and America played the leading part, was an agreement to a long holiday in the building of large warships, i.e. battleships and battle cruisers. The fleets of the United States and the British Empire were fixed at 15 super-dreadnoughts each and the Japanese Navy at 10. No new fortifications were to be erected in the Pacific, which suited the Japanese very well as they had all the fortified bases they needed for the time being; and as they made the mandated islands, the former German colonial possessions, into closed areas, they were able to do what they liked to prepare them as advanced bases.

Under Article 19 of the Washington Treaty of Limitation of Naval Armaments, signed on 6 February 1922, the United States of America, the British Empire, and Japan, agreed to maintain the *status quo* with regard to the fortifications and naval bases in the United States of America, the British Empire and the Japanese insular possessions and territory in the Pacific Ocean. Singapore was expressly excluded and, in any case, is not in the Pacific Ocean; yet the Japanese made a great outcry when we began to improve the naval base in 1923. Largely because of American sentiment and desire the Anglo-Japanese alliance was not renewed when its current term came to an end in 1922.

On 29 December 1934 the Japanese Government denounced the Washington Treaty, and under its terms the denunciation took effect and the Treaty lapsed on 31 December 1936.

The Russian Revolution of October 1917 led to a loosening of the Russian hold on Northern Manchuria, which as a sphere of influence had remained as a legacy of Czarist days. Russian interests in Northern Manchuria were salvage from the Russo-Japanese War. Japan played her part in the general intervention against the Soviet Government, and Japanese armies penetrated far into Siberia. They were withdrawn under Russian pressure when the chaos of the revolution had given way to some semblance of civil and military power. The new Russian Government was not interested in Imperialist adventures in China or Manchuria, and the Manchurian railway, built at such cost by the Czar's railway engineers, was eventually purchased by Japan.

By 1931 the real rulers of Japan, the naval and military cliques, were ready for the next forward move. The Chinese revolution had led to much internal disorder. Various War Lords, with their private armies, dominated many of the great Chinese provinces, and Man-

churia, though remaining part of the Chinese Empire, was virtually autonomous under its own General. The strong man of Manchuria, Marshal Chiang Tso-lin, died in 1918, and was succeeded by his son Chiang Hsueh-liang, known as the young Marshal.

For twenty years the Japanese had been infiltrating into this province. Possession of the southern part of the railway, as a spoil of the Russo-Japanese War, and the northern part by purchase, as already described, gave Japan the right to maintain railway guards which, in effect, were fully organized and heavily-armed military forces.

A fresh economic blizzard had struck Europe and its effects were felt throughout the world, including Japan and the United States of America. These financial and economic distractions provided Japan with another opportunity for mischief.

A convenient plot was discovered, and Japan struck against China for the third time. The capital, Mukden, was occupied, and Japanese armies proceeded to the methodical conquest of all the territory north and east of the Great Wall. Though there was a specious case for regarding Manchuria as no longer an integral part of the Chinese Empire, there was no such excuse for the conquest of the purely Chinese provinces of Jehol and Chahar which followed. Inner Mongolia was also brought under Japanese suzerainty and Outer Mongolia would have followed but for the fact that it had already been taken under Russian protection following on the establishment of a Soviet form of Government in this vast, sparsely populated region.

The civilized world of 1931 was profoundly shocked by Japan's act of aggression. China had given no real cause for offence. Her crime, in Japanese eyes, was that the Chinese Republic which had arisen from the ashes of the Manchu Empire was finding its feet. The Nationalist Party of revolution, the Kuomintang, founded in Canton by a great Chinese leader, the late Dr. Sun Yat-sen, was pulling the vast country together, bringing the War Lords to heel, strengthening the Central Government and successfully pursuing a great programme of economic reforms and popular education. The prospect of a strong, happy, contented, and peaceful China was not to the liking of the ambitious War Lords of Tokio. The conquest of Manchuria was only a preliminary to further encroachments and this was clearly understood by informed persons in every country. This aggression was a violation of the Kellogg Pact and the Covenant of the League of Nations, to both of which Japan was a signatory. It was also a violation of the Washington Nine Power Treaty. Among its clauses is one binding the signatories

'to respect the sovereignty, the independence, and the territorial and administrative integrity of China.'

Another clause bound the contracting Powers

'to communicate fully and frankly with one another'

in any situation involving the application of the clauses of the Treaty.

The retaliation of the Chinese Government and people generally to the aggression in Manchuria took the form of a trade boycott. This boycott organization had its headquarters at Shanghai, the most important centre in China so far as Japanese trade was concerned. It led to considerable friction between Chinese and Japanese in Greater Shanghai, the closely populated district lying outside the International Settlement. The Japanese had always claimed the right to maintain a large garrison in the International Settlement and usually had several large warships in the river. On 28 January, 1932, the Japanese troops marched out of the International Settlement and attacked the Chinese in Greater Shanghai. There was resistance, much fighting, and a great slaughter of peaceable Chinese citizens. The fighting went on till 3 March following, when the local Consuls and the diplomats of the neutral Powers on the spot managed to arrange an armistice. The matter came before the Assembly of the League of Nations and the Japanese attitude was roundly condemned in resolutions passed by the Assembly on 4 March and 11 March 1932. As the result of international pressure, the Japanese authorities finally agreed to withdraw their troops from Chinese territory to the International Settlement on 5 May 1932. Up till this point, therefore, it will be seen that the League of Nations exercised considerable influence on Japan's policy.

These words are written in the midst of the second World War which has already dwarfed in savagery and destructiveness the first World War of 1914-18. The latter was fought and won by the millions of common people everywhere, who hoped that their sacrifices would lead to a better order of society in which law and justice would prevail over the rule of the gunman. The League of Nations had been established to implement this world-wide desire. The common people everywhere hoped that it would really mean an era of peace, an end to competition in armaments, and a removal of the constant threat of war. Public opinion everywhere was profoundly shocked to discover that a heavily armed nation in Eastern Asia, led by a ruthless and unscrupulous Government, was prepared to tear up solemn treaties, attack peaceable neighbours, and endanger the peace of the world. Having, as they thought, taught mankind everywhere a lesson by defeating the Germany of the Kaiser and her allies, it was gravely disturbing to find that yet another nation was preparing to follow the same path of destruction and lawlessness.

Up till then the League of Nations, despite the withdrawal of the United States of America, had been looked upon as a real power for keeping the peace. A strong and growing body of opinion in America, though still in a minority, was in favour of re-entry. Japan herself was a member, as was China. The South American Republics and the British Dominions were firm supporters. States like revolutionary

Russia and defeated Germany, which had been treated as pariahs, sought membership.

There was an immediate demand for the League machinery to be put into motion against Japan. There would have been the same demand at that time in 1931 for the machinery to be put into motion against any aggressor in any part of the world, as indeed it had been in the case of Italy's assault on Greece, in South American disputes, and in Balkan quarrels.

Though the American Congress was strongly isolationist where European disputes were concerned and, generally speaking, was supported by American public opinion, there were immediate repercussions to this breach of the peace in Asia. Americans, especially those living on the Pacific coast of the Union, had for long been suspicious of Japan's intentions.

America's policy with regard to China has already been referred to. The Washington Government let it be known immediately that League action to check this new aggression would have whole-hearted American support. The League met on 10 December 1931, and decided to send out a strong Commission of Enquiry under the leadership of the Earl of Lytton. The forces at work behind the scenes—which means in most of the European Chancelleries—which were secretly hostile to the League, and had been from the beginning, no doubt intended this as a delaying action. Few of the older school of diplomats had any love for the League of Nations, which, whatever the weaknesses of its constitution, did contain the germ of World Federation and the end of their beloved secret diplomacy. However this may have been, the Lytton Commission reporting on the facts and making all allowances for Japan's economic needs and grievances, condemned the Manchurian invasion. No honest man could have done otherwise. An important preliminary report was sent from Mukden on 30 April 1932. In February 1933 the final report, which strongly condemned Japan's aggression, was adopted by the Council. The League now had to act. Where Japan was concerned only nations with strong navies could support the economic sanctions proposed for checking the aggressor. Fortunately the American Government and people, as already described, were ready for action. Mr. Stimson, the American Secretary of State, acting on behalf of his Government, let it be known that if economic sanctions were applied to Japan his country would play her full part. Unfortunately the economic blizzard had brought about a change of government in Britain. The Labour Ministry had fallen and with it the best and most enlightened Foreign Secretary, the late Mr. Arthur Henderson, which the British Parliamentary system had thrown up for half a century. Now the Coalition Government, which had been formed for the purpose of keeping the pound sterling on the gold standard, ruled in its stead, and Sir John Simon (as he then was) occupied the room in the Foreign Office with the beautiful view over St. James's

Park, vacated by Mr. Henderson. As Foreign Secretary of Britain, and, later, one of the most influential members of the Cabinets presided over in turn by Messrs. Ramsay MacDonald, Stanley Baldwin, and Neville Chamberlain, this legal luminary has as much to answer for to the British peoples for their subsequent troubles as any other living man. He has been well described as a great man in small things and a small man in great things. Of undoubted forensic ability, he can argue any case, good or bad, with great adroitness. The meeting at Geneva when Simon betrayed the League of Nations marked the close of a chapter in history. Until the British Foreign Secretary set to work behind the scenes, Japan faced the League, with its American observer, apparently without a friend in the world. The application of economic sanctions by the League members plus America would have ruined her. As already described, America was willing, and, given the right lead, the whole of the civilized world would have followed suit. I was in the United States at this time and in contact with many people who mould public opinion or carry out the popular will. There was no doubt whatever of the determination of the American people and the great majority of the American leaders to put a stop to this new aggression and teach this brigand Power a badly needed lesson. As typical I will quote a conversation I had with the largest importer of Japanese silk. America's principal import from Japan was silk, and silk was one of the most important sources of Japanese revenue. This gentleman made no secret of the fact that economic sanctions against Japan would ruin him and his firm; but he made it clear that he and his colleagues would count it an honour to make the sacrifice for the sake of an ideal. This view of one who would describe himself as a hard-boiled American business man was representative. To the horror and disgust of everyone who had hoped that—despite its shortcomings and the frailties of those who controlled its machinery—the League of Nations would be used in a worthy manner on this great occasion, the Foreign Minister of Britain threw his protecting robes over the Japanese delegates. Stimson was rebuffed, the League was made a laughing-stock, and the chief Japanese delegate excused himself from making any defence as he could not do it better than Sir John Simon had already done.

From this gigantic blunder, to put the matter generously, many tragedies followed. The one world force which might have prevented the future catastrophes was fatally weakened. Men everywhere who believed in the League of Nations, in the doctrine of collective security, and in the good effects of a world conscience, lost faith. Those who secretly hated the League and all it stood for, crept out from their holes to mock and deride. The Japanese militarists received the 'all clear' to go full speed ahead with their schemes for the conquest of China as a preliminary to the conquest of Asia and the elimination of the influence of all other nations, save Japan, from the Pacific and its surrounding territories. The gangsters who were building up the

Nazi Party and plotting to seize power in Germany were stimulated and encouraged, and when their time came they felt it safe to attack nations singly without fear of meeting the combined resistance of the other peace-loving States. When the Italian Fascists, not to be outdone, tore up their Treaties and assailed Abyssinia, the League of Nations had been so morally weakened that the Simon-Chamberlain clique were able once more to prevent its functioning. The breakdown of the sanctions policy against Italy through the failure to apply it to petroleum was the virtual end of the League of Nations as a force for peace. When, one by one, Nazi Germany fell upon Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, no one in authority was found to suggest putting the machinery of the League constitution into motion. The bombs which crippled American sea power at Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941 were fashioned in Geneva ten years previously. The real fabricators of those bombs were not the Japanese, but Viscount Simon, now Lord Chancellor of England, and his confederates.

The excuses made for this betrayal, this compromise with evil, were the familiar ones put forward as a defence in other attempts at appeasement. Japan, it was said, is over-populated. Her eighty million inhabitants increase at the rate of seven hundred thousand a year.<sup>1</sup> They must, therefore, have room for expansion; or *lebensraum*, to use the Nazi jargon. Much of the Archipelago is mountainous, and agriculture alone will not support its teeming population. There is a deficiency of raw materials. The Japanese rulers deliberately encouraged population increase on the old militarist plea that there must be plenty of young men coming of military age every year for the army. And because there are these increases yearly there must be space for settlement overseas. Actually, Japan lives on her foreign trade, which has increased enormously in the last quarter of a century. There is a liberal and mercantile school in Japan represented in the impotent Japanese Diet which, from time to time, has sought to check the more extravagant programmes of the militarists. This mercantile school had solid grounds for its arguments. Before the outbreak of the war in the Pacific, Japan moved up into the first place among the nations of the world as an exporter of textiles, and her engineering, chemical, and other industries were making great progress in the world's markets. But that Manchuria, or, indeed, any part of China, would satisfy Japan as a sphere for colonization is an absurd proposition. The winter climate in Manchuria and North China is severe

<sup>1</sup> Population of Japan in the census of 1 October 1938: the population of Japan proper was returned at 72,222,700. The Empire of Japan, consisting of the Japanese Archipelago, Korea, Formosa, Kwantung Province and the South Sea Islands at the same date had a population of 97,697,000.

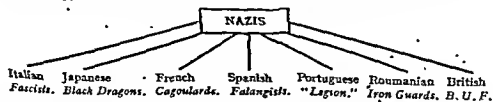
The density of population was as follows:

Japan proper	.. ..	469 to the square mile
Korea	.. ..	269 to the square mile
Formosa	.. ..	374 to the square mile
Kwantung	.. ..	1,239 to the square mile

and the Japanese do not thrive in cold climates. More important still, they cannot compete economically with the more skillful and frugal Chinese. Japanese farmers cannot exist in face of Chinese competition. They have made some headway as colonists in Korea, but in Manchuria and China they succeeded only as officials and traders. The all-powerful militarist school and the Secret Societies which dominate public life in Japan have ambitions far beyond the acquisition of space for colonization. I believe it to be well established that Baron Tanaka, a former Japanese Prime Minister, having made a special study of the whole situation at the command of the Emperor, presented a lengthy and detailed report showing how Japan could proceed to vast conquests. This report, which was presented in 1935, was given to the world through the instrumentality of two Chinese translators employed in the Foreign Office in Tokio. Its existence has been denied, but Japanese actions have followed faithfully the course outlined.

Beginning with the conquest of Manchuria and the northern provinces of China, the whole of the Chinese Empire was to be brought under Japanese domination. French Indo-China, the Philippines, Malaya, and the Dutch East Indian possessions were to follow. The British were to be ousted as a governing power in India, and Australia and New Zealand annexed. Even these far-reaching ambitions were not the end of the programme. The Tanaka Plan aimed at making Japan the dominating Power in the world!

It will be noticed that the apparent adoption of this Tanaka Plan as a national policy coincided with the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany. The ideology of Herren Hitler and Rosenberg has its counterpart in many countries. It is a phenomenon of the fourth decade of the twentieth century. Japan's adherence to the German-Italian Axis was a perfectly natural development when it is remembered that the Japanese secret societies and particularly the Black Dragons speak the same sort of language and are imbued with the same sort of ideas as their counterparts in several other States. The international organization of what we may call Nazis can be illustrated as follows:



The Japanese Nazis and other Secret Societies drew their strength from the professional officers of the army and navy, and particularly the army. Ultra-patriotic from their own point of view, they used the weapons of blackmail and murder to impose their will on the Cabinet, Ministers, Generals, and Admirals who came under suspicion of being too moderate or cautious. The Emperor, who is a



mere figure-head, is represented to the masses in Japan as a semi-divine personality descended from the gods, whose will must be accepted without question or argument. The Ministers and civil servants who have the delicate duty of 'advising' the Ruler themselves live under the constant terror of the assassin's bullet. The masses of the people are expected to be docile, obedient, and hard-working on a miserable pittance.

Commerce, shipping, banking, and industry are controlled by four great monopolies managed on a family basis. These are the Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, and Okura. Feudalism, operated under a clan system, controls the army and navy; and there is considerable rivalry between these two services. Feudalism in the Japanese Admiralty and War Office, and monopoly capitalism in finance and industry, manipulate the Government and control policy. On the surface, the result is a totalitarian State, in which war is the principal national industry. Beneath the surface are weaknesses. The immense expenditure on armaments, preparations for war, and foreign conquests has virtually bankrupted Japan's economy. Excessively high taxes and a comparatively high cost of living, combined with low wages, have progressively reduced the standard of life of the mass of the peasant farmers and working-class families. Though hidden, there is much underground discontent. A ruthless, cruel, and efficient police system has not succeeded in destroying this underground movement. Industrialization has created a vast proletariat, seething with discontent. A real defeat for Japan and the destruction of her legend of invincibility will bring about a tremendous popular explosion. Hence, amongst other troubles of Japan's rulers, is the fear of democratic or socialist movements in their own and in other countries. Japan's adherence to Hitler's anti-Comintern Pact and her violent hostility to Soviet Russia was perfectly natural. So was the fear of a democratic victory over Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in the second World War. To discourage what the police in Japan describe as dangerous thinking, democracy and liberalism everywhere must be destroyed, and, above all, the great Russian experiment discredited. Foreign wars and adventures, the ancient device of dictator governments for checking popular discontent, combined with the vanity of a half-civilized people suffering from an inferiority complex, explains Japan's policy, or rather the policy of her rulers, during the present century.

The origin of the Japanese is obscure. They probably emigrated to the Japanese islands from Malaya, though there is a strong Mongol strain. There they found an aborigine population, the Ainus, one of the most primitive racial stocks still surviving in the world. A few of them still exist in the cold northern island of Hokkaido. The Japanese themselves claim that their Empire was founded by Jimmu Tenno in 660 B.C. Such culture as the Japanese can boast came to them from China via Korea.



ADMIRAL ERNEST J. KING  
*Commander-in-Chief, United States Navy*

*Sport & General*



GENERAL HIROAKI TOJO  
*Prime Minister of Japan*

  
Keystone

The archipelago was closed to all foreigners from the sixteenth century to 1853, with the exception of a few privileged Dutch traders and technicians. It is interesting that the doors of Japanese seclusion were broken down by an American naval squadron. In the lifetime of people still living, Japan was changed from a primitive feudal Oriental State to a highly industrialized militarist nation equipped with all the inventions and paraphernalia of western civilization and science. The development has been too rapid. The savage remains, despite his modern trappings. The degraded position of women in Japan is one proof of the real backwardness of this extraordinary people. Briefly, women have no rights whatsoever in Japan. They are treated as chattels, and divorced on the word of the husband. The Japanese have given little to the world in the realms of science, art, or literature. They have proved themselves wonderful imitators of the worst features of our western civilization. They are a seafaring people and good sailors; and the pick of their troops are good soldiers. The legend of their invincibility and military prowess has been shattered during the so-called China 'incident' when, after four years of fighting, the under-equipped and under-organized Chinese troops proved themselves again and again better warriors, man for man, than the Japanese soldiery. The conduct of their troops in China during these campaigns has been abominable. Their air force, with no opposition to speak of, led the way in the indiscriminate bombing, for the purpose of terror, of unarmed populations. In captured cities the soldiery, including the officers, have behaved with the greatest cruelty and licence. City after city in China which has fallen to Japanese arms has been systematically looted, the men and children murdered and the women outraged. In the wake of the conquering armies on the mainland of Asia have followed the petty officials and traders, utterly corrupt and unscrupulous and working hand-in-glove with the General Staff of the army. Where the banner of the Rising Sun floats vice is commercialized, the drug traffic flourishes and opium smoking, the curse of China, openly encouraged. 'Asia for the Asiatics', the Japanese propaganda slogan, means the degradation, exploitation, and robbery of conquered peoples. The Japanese bureaucracy is hopelessly corrupt and dishonest at home and abroad, but especially abroad. The occupation of a province in China has meant the entry of a swarm of get-rich-quick adventurers from Japan devouring the wealth of the district like a swarm of locusts and protected by the High Command of the army which shares in the proceeds.

Japan's strength lies in the genius of her leaders for organization. Their people are the best spies in the world. Every Japanese abroad has the definite mission of collecting and collating every item of information that can possibly be of value to his Government. When the Japanese invaders landed in the Philippines, supposedly harmless little barbers and shopkeepers who had been dwelling there for years

without arousing suspicion appeared in the uniforms of reserve officers of the Japanese army and navy. I believe the story to be true of the American naval officer who had an excellent and devoted Japanese personal servant. Years afterwards, when he himself had attained high rank and was the senior officer in an American naval port, he received a courtesy visit from the captain of a Japanese cruiser. Feeling sure he recognized his visitor, he challenged him and drew the confession that he was the same man who, while himself a commissioned officer, had served his American master well as a valet and, while doing so, had found out everything possible about the American Fleet and Naval Service.

In all their campaigns, the Japanese General Staff make the most careful preparations beforehand. They apply to their military science the navigator's adage that the art of seamanship is never to take risks. Everything is prepared beforehand down to the minutest detail. Yet if the plans go wrong, they are not good at improvisation, and in defeat the rank and file are liable to panic.

Such is the Power which, equipped with all the latest weapons and practising the most modern methods of totalitarian war, challenged the British Empire and the United States of America on 7 December 1941.

Twenty-four hours before the Japanese planes and submarines made their dawn attack on Pearl Harbour, the great Russian counter-offensive began on the 2,000 mile front stretching from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea. During the next five weeks 300,000 German officers and soldiers were killed; immense numbers of tanks, guns, aeroplanes, transport vehicles and weapons of all kinds were captured or destroyed; important areas of territory, including numerous towns, reconquered; and the might of the invading armies crippled.

It would be an interesting speculation, though fruitless, to consider whether Japan would have thrown down her challenge if the events of the next five weeks could have been foreseen.

## CHAPTER II

### WHY JAPAN STRUCK

JAPAN'S intervention in the second World War was to be expected. All those familiar with the long-term Japanese policy recognized clearly that at the moment which seemed most favourable to her fortunes she would attack on the side of her Axis partners. The only element of doubt was as to when this would be.

The so-called settlement of Munich led her statesmen to believe

that Britain and France had been bought off by Germany for the time being and that the war, when it came, would be between Germany and Russia, the Western democracies standing aloof. In that event, Japan would have made her preparations to intervene on Germany's side when the issue was no longer in doubt for the purpose of destroying Russian influence in Outer Mongolia, seizing the Russian and northern half of the island of Sakhalin and its oilfields, annexing the maritime province of Siberia, and as much of the Hinterland as she could grab.

That Japan would intervene immediately on the side of Germany against Russia was quite out of the question. During July and August 1938 a bitter and bloody, though undeclared, war had been fought between the Japanese Army in Northern Manchuria and a portion of the Russian eastern Siberian Army. The Japanese forces had been worsted in a number of engagements. These were no mere frontier skirmishes, though they originated in clashes between frontier patrols. Both sides brought up reinforcements including tanks, aeroplanes and heavy artillery. A series of pitched battles had taken place ending in a Russian victory. The Japanese knew well that the Russian Siberian armies had been organized on an autonomous basis with their own arsenals and munition factories, and that they were capable of fighting an independent campaign, no matter what the fortunes of war might be on the Polish marches. Furthermore, the Japanese recognized that the Russian Air Force was formidable and growing and that their crowded and flimsy cities were ideal targets for long-range bombing attacks from the Russian aerodromes in the Maritime Province. Furthermore, the China 'incident', as the Japanese have always described it, had gone badly. After the most careful preparations, both military and political, and encouraged by the general alarm and disturbance a re-arming and pugnacious Nazi Germany was creating in Europe, the great assault on her mighty land neighbour was launched on 7 July 1937. This adventure was confidently expected by the Japanese to end in their victory after six months. Here the Japanese leaders, so competent in judging small issues, made a gigantic blunder. Their constant bullying and pin-pricking of China, their blatant attempts to maintain a condition of anarchy and disorder and to prevent the Republic from establishing itself, their treachery and intrigue, had at last roused the sleeping giant in the Chinese character. The bitter disputes between the Kuomintang leaders and the Chinese Communist Party were settled. Chinese patriotism began to burn again like a bright flame. The profession of arms, which for centuries had been despised by a people who had placed scholarship on the highest plane, became once more respectable and respected. There was an unexpected scarcity of Chinese traitors or quislings. With little modern equipment, few trained officers, and all the ingrained habits of procrastination and corruption inherited from the old régime, the Chinese rallied and

fought back. Though Peking, Nanking, Hankow and Canton, the four greatest cities in China, were occupied, though the Japanese obtained control of the more important part of the great waterway of the Yangtse river, though all the ports and coastal districts were brought under Japanese domination, the Chinese refused to accept defeat.

The Japanese attempted to shorten the conflict by methods of terrorism. Their cruelties and outrages only hardened Chinese resolution. Not only was the capital moved to the distant and hitherto backward province of Szechwan, but the universities with their professors and students, and factories with their technicians, skilled workers and machinery were moved into what might be described as the Chinese 'Wild West'. With almost incredible toil and enterprise the great road from the Burmese border to Chungking was built over the mountains and formed a vitally important avenue for supplies from the outside world. A trickle of arms and munitions came in by overland caravan route from Asiatic Russia in addition. Guerrilla warfare on an immense scale was organized and played havoc with the Japanese lines of communication and in their back areas. Despite the eventual setting up of a puppet Government at Nanking, the Japanese brought little of the vast country under their administration, and their writ only ran within range of their field guns.

In Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek China found one of her greatest leaders. The Chinese armies grew. Despite continual reinforcements of the large formations maintained by the Japanese, their military situation became increasingly difficult.

Their greatest setback, and probably the turning point in this immense struggle, were the three unsuccessful Japanese attacks on the important city of Changsha, on the main railway line from Hankow on the Yangtse to Canton. Hankow is the most important inland commercial centre in China, and near the head of the river waters navigable by large ships. The ability to use this railway for sending troops and supplies direct from Hankow to Canton would be of the greatest importance in the event of a Japanese naval setback and large scale military operations at the same time by Indian and Chinese armies. Furthermore, Changsha is the centre of an important rice-growing district. Three times strong Japanese armies reached the outskirts of the city, and each time Chinese forces, brilliantly handled, cut in on their lines of communication and forced their retreat with heavy losses. The third of these defeats was in December 1941, and ended in the virtual destruction of a Japanese army of more than 100,000 men, with a wealth of modern armaments and heavy equipment.

On a conservative estimate the Japanese forces in China were eventually increased to 1,500,000 men, and in four years of fighting they suffered at least 600,000 casualties. The pressure of Chinese manpower, from an almost inexhaustible reservoir, had begun to tell by the middle of 1941.

It is not possible to over-estimate or over-state the services performed in this heroic struggle of the Chinese people and their leaders to the cause of liberty and justice. If Japanese plans had succeeded and Chinese resistance had been beaten down in the estimated time, there is little doubt that Japan would have thrown in her lot with Germany a year, or even two years, earlier.

The Japanese programme was thrown into temporary disarray also by the sudden and altogether unexpected signing of the Non-Aggression Pact between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in August 1939. The Japanese Government was neither consulted nor informed in advance. Its ally, Nazi Germany, had executed a *volle face* and come to terms with the Power which, on the long view, the Japanese feared the most. A complete reorientation of Japanese policy was now required. Great caution was needed to avoid a rupture with Russia. So long as Germany could not be relied upon to engage the great bulk of the Russian armies in the West, the Japanese leaders felt themselves in danger of having to face a war with Russia single-handed while they still had vast armies entangled in the huge Chinese provinces.

The very keynote of all Japanese policy is caution and patience. Her leaders, therefore, bided their time. The question has often been asked why Japan did not strike at the British Empire in the Pacific immediately after the collapse of France and the Dunkirk episode. The United States was still isolationist, and even the American interventionists were thrown into a defeatist state of mind. Japan could have thrown her whole weight against the British possessions and protectorates in the Pacific.

The answer is twofold. Firstly, Japan was not ready, partly because of her entanglements in China; and, secondly, because the native caution of her leaders counselled them to wait for the expected invasion and defeat of Britain by Germany. Then Hongkong, Malaya, Burma, and the whole of the Dutch East Indies would, by their calculations, have fallen into Japan's lap like ripe plums. This failure to attack after Dunkirk was undoubtedly the second great blunder of the Japanese leaders. They tried to make things too easy for their armed forces, and waited too long. Their third chance came with the German invasion of Russia on 22 June 1941. It is unlikely that the members of the Japanese General Staff shared the view of their opposite numbers in Whitehall that Russian resistance would collapse in a month or two. They knew too much about the Red Army and Air Force from first-hand experience, and were not misled by the poor showing of the Russian troops at the beginning of the Finnish campaign. They undoubtedly believed that a German victory in Russia was assured; so the time had come for the next forward movement. Contrary to Franco-Japanese engagements, Japanese troops had occupied the large island of Hainan, off the coast of French Indo-China. The next step was to stir up trouble and fighting between Thailand and the French



Colonial authorities in Indo-China who adhered to the Vichy Government. The Siamese had old grievances against the French, and the Japanese acted as brokers for the retrocession of certain territories which had previously belonged to the Siamese Crown.

The next move was to begin a process of threats and blackmail against the wretched Vichy officials in Indo-China. Parallel pressure was brought to bear on the Pétain Government at Vichy itself by the Nazis. The Japanese demand was the right to station troops and aeroplanes on Indo-Chinese territory and warships in Indo-Chinese ports in order to meet a supposed threat from Chinese armies in the provinces of Yunnan and Kwangsi. After some show of resistance the French Colonial Government capitulated. Japanese troops and air squadrons poured into the country and Japanese fleets sailed into Kamranh Bay and Saigon. Kamranh is one of the finest natural harbours in the world, and lies approximately half way between Hongkong and Singapore, and some 1,500 miles from each.

Japan's occupation and virtual annexation of Indo-China in July 1941, and her rapprochement with Thailand were danger signals for the British, Americans and Dutch. Belated action was taken to bring economic pressure to bear on Japan. In the United States, the British Empire, and throughout the Dutch East Indian colonies Japanese credits were frozen, financial facilities refused, and what amounted to an economic blockade put into force. Unfortunately, these economic sanctions were not matched by the necessary naval and military dispositions. During this time long drawn-out negotiations were in progress between a Japanese trade mission and the Dutch authorities of Batavia for an assured supply of petroleum to Japan. The Japanese were at no pains to disguise their intentions of seizing the necessary oil by force if they could not secure it by guile; and the Dutch answer had been to join in the economic sanctions. Reinforcements of British and Imperial troops and air squadrons had been sent to Malaya and Hongkong, and in the autumn of 1941 an improved naval situation had enabled the British Admiralty to send two heavy ships of the line, the new battleship *Prince of Wales* and the battle cruiser *Repulse*, to Singapore. In the Philippines was a small American naval force, the Asiatic Fleet, while the main American Fleet had been split between Hawaii and the Atlantic. The United States was by now engaged in an undeclared war against Japan's Axis partners. Hitler's Germany was seen as the great menace to civilization, and American public opinion was slowly gathering behind its President in the determination to aid in its overthrow. The attitude of the American President has been accurately described, through personal contact, as being like that of a householder getting ready to defend his front door against an armed gunman threatening to break in. Word is brought to him that a little boy is stealing his apples in his back garden. If the little boy becomes too cheeky, the householder has to run out of his back door to chastise him; but he hopes the urchin will not go too far, and

will leave him to devote his main attention to the enemy in front. The fault in the appraisalment of the situation by the householder was the failure to recognize that the little boy has lethal weapons, and that an urchin can shoot to kill as well as a gunman.

The correct strategical move for the United States when the Japanese annexed Indo-China was to send the Pacific Fleet to Manila or, better still, to Singapore. Unfortunately, democracies are not always able to follow the dictates of strategy. The American naval staff must have been in favour of this move. It would have checkmated Japan's designs completely. The Japanese armies in Indo-China and South China had to be supplied and reinforced from Japanese ports 2,000 and 3,000 miles distant. A strong naval force in the South China Sea based either on Manila or Singapore would threaten these lines of communication. Such a move, though fully justified in the circumstances and viewing the situation as a whole, would have been bitterly resented by the Isolationist Party in the American Congress, who would have accused the Administration of provocative action. Nevertheless, the Japanese were taking no avoidable risks. In October 1941 the Government of Prince Konoye resigned and was replaced by a Government headed by the pro-German General Tojo. A prominent Japanese statesman, Mr. Kurusu, was sent to Washington on a goodwill mission. He and the Japanese Ambassador, Admiral Namura, then went through the motions of negotiating an agreement with America for preserving the peace of the Pacific. The Secretary of State, Mr. Cordell Hull, could hardly refuse to receive these self-styled missionaries of peace, and many weeks were spent in negotiations which the Japanese knew perfectly well could only end in agreement if their Government was prepared to abandon the whole expansionist policy of the Empire. As no Japanese Government could do this and live, in the literal sense of the word, the Kurusu mission was treacherous and dishonest from its very inception. Its object was to gain time; and the time was to be used for careful and complete preparations for a simultaneous assault on British, American and Dutch possessions in the Pacific.

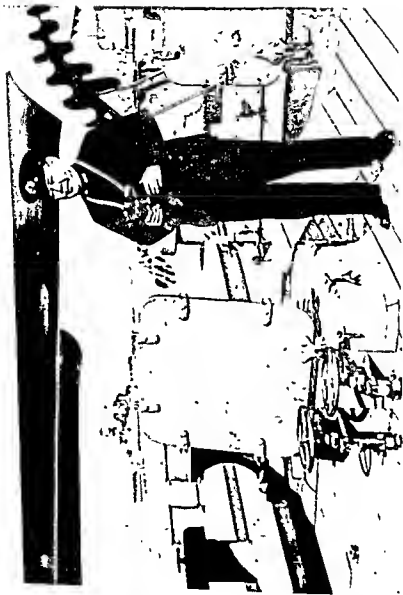
As already noted, the Japanese Government hoped for a German victory before American public opinion had been converted to the necessity of intervening to prevent such a victory. The ideal situation, from the Japanese point of view, would have been the defeat of Britain and Russia and then a last minute intervention by Japan as a gatherer of spoils. Despite the exhaustion of the great campaigns in China, Japan had her navy, second only in strength to the American and British fleets, a considerable air force, calculated as consisting of 2,500 first line planes, and she was capable of mobilizing fifty to seventy divisions of troops over and above those engaged in China, on garrison duty in Manchuria, or as a holding force on the Russian frontier with Manchuria and Inner Mongolia. The victorious Germany visualized by the Japanese would have been exhausted, and with only a meagre

fleet. Hitler and his confederates would have raged when the Japanese stepped in and filched the Colonial possessions of Britain, Holland, France and Portugal in the Pacific; but could have done little else.

This was the rosy prospect presented to Japanese eyes by the victory of her Axis partner in Europe. But if Germany and Italy were not victorious, if the growing strength and production potential of the United States was finally thrown into the war against Germany, the prospect for Japan would be bleak. Germany in defeat, Italy and the other minor satellite Powers deserting their ally, Britain, Russia and the United States victorious, would have meant the end of all Japanese pretensions. The resurgent military forces of China only required modern weapons to evict the Japanese from the mainland of Asia. These weapons would have been poured into China by the victorious democracies and by Soviet Russia. The British and American Fleets, freed of the complication of the Atlantic war and concentrated in the Pacific would have been an equally unanswerable argument. The only alternatives before Japan would have been to fight the victors, with no hope whatever of success, or to have acceded to their demands; and these demands had been made perfectly clear by Mr. Hull in what was meant to be his final memorandum to Mr. Kurusu on 26 November 1941. In a sentence, Japan must abandon war as an instrument of national policy, retire from China (including Manchukuo), and devote her energies to the arts of peace. At all costs, therefore, the Japanese leaders must avoid a situation such as this; and by December 1941 it was obvious in Tokio that, whatever else happened, Germany would not be an out-and-out victor.

The Japanese Government, before December 1941, had the best sources of information of any administration in the world. Nominally a neutral, except for the China 'incident', Japanese legations or embassies and consulates were in every country. The Japanese intelligence system has always been excellent. Every Japanese is a natural spy and only too willing everywhere and at all times to provide useful information for his government. Some millions of Japanese live outside the Japanese Empire. They are the Japanese Intelligence Service. The chiefs of this service of information eschew the luxury of class or national prejudice. They weigh agents' reports and information on their actual value.

The failure of the German armies to destroy the Russian forces in the field before the winter of 1941-42 was an accurate pointer to the future. The gradual but steady change in American public opinion and the growth in American armaments and supplies of munitions to Britain, Russia and China was another pointer. The risk of Germany losing the war had become too great, though it is doubtful if the Japanese visualized the extent of the coming German débâcle in Russia. Both Britain and America had vast naval shipbuilding programmes in hand. Both were building two-ocean navies which meant that they were doubling their existing fleets. Japan, with her sub-



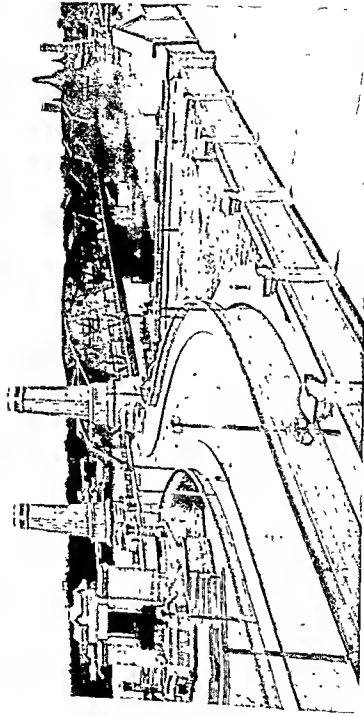
Planet

ADMIRAL OSAMI NAGANO  
*Commander-in-Chief, Japanese Navy*

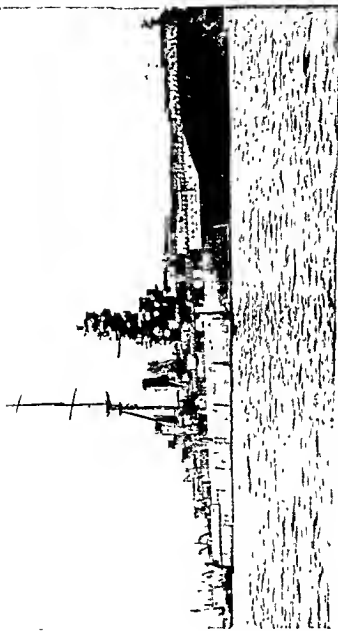


*Topical*

GENERALISSIMO CHIANG KAI-SHEK AND MADAME CHIANG KAI-SHEK



MEMORIAL BRIDGE, BANGKOK



JAPANESE BATTLESHIP "HIEI"

Spott & General

stantial but limited shipbuilding resources, and embarrassed by a shortage of iron and steel, was in a relatively stronger position at sea at the end of 1941 than she would have been a year later, and she would have been in a far weaker relative position two years later. Britain, despite American help, was still striving to overcome her lag in the production of weapons. The Japanese knew accurately the state of British and American armaments in the Pacific. The complete answer to why Japan struck on 7 December 1941 is that it was the most favourable moment to create a large-scale diversion in Germany's favour and, at the same time, to further her own ends. The decision was probably taken some time during the previous October. The moment the Japanese decided to undertake this great adventure the whole totalitarian machine of the State was put into motion in complete secrecy for the necessary preparations and preliminary moves.

Though the Japanese leaders made war at their own time and for their own ends, and their diversionary help to Germany was only a secondary consideration, Nazi influences undoubtedly helped to weaken the moderate and more cautious party in the Japanese governing class, and to stimulate and encourage the forward school. The German Ambassador in Tokio was General Ott. Amply supplied with funds and with a very large staff, Ott plotted and intrigued for years. He was successful, particularly in breaking down the suspicions of the Japanese War Ministry. This was accomplished through the agency of General Falkenhausen, who, for some years, had been one of the military advisers of General Chiang Kai-shek. Falkenhausen apparently played his part honestly for a time, but, presently, under the pressure of the ubiquitous Gestapo, he used the German diplomatic bag to send military secrets which had come to his knowledge to the German Ambassador in Tokio. Ott acquired much favour by giving this information about Chinese military preparations and the like to the officials in the Japanese War Office.

The German Embassy was also a kind of clearing house for the various Fascist and semi-Fascist secret societies, of which the Black Dragons were not only the most important but nearest to the Nazi Party in political ideology. Other groups who received sympathy and practical help in the form of money when they wanted it were the Fascist Tohokai and Shimpeitai. The German Embassy also followed the practice in other countries of buying up newspapers. Besides a number of small provincial papers Ott bought two journals with a considerable circulation, the *Hochi Shimbun* and the *Kokumun*. Nearly 1,000 German aviation technicians and skilled pilots were in Japan before the outbreak of the second World War. There they stayed and gave all the assistance in their power for the re-organization and re-equipment of the Japanese Air Force. In addition to these aviation experts, General Ott had 3,000 technical experts, agents, and other 'diplomats' on his staff at the time of Japan's intervention. They included a certain Herr Heuber, a senior Gestapo official, who headed



a considerable staff of German secret police experts. These latter obtained a firm footing in the Japanese police headquarters and Home Office. Where Nazi policy or interest required, bribery and blackmail were used. It was Ott's influence which obtained for General Heisuke Yanagawa, who had been educated in Germany and was violently pro-Nazi, the post of Minister of Justice. Some of Ott's German pilots were shot down and captured in the Malayan campaign.

The decision having been taken to gamble Japan's whole future against her armed strength, why were Britain and America attacked simultaneously? The answer is that such an assault brought the maximum element of surprise. Prime Minister Churchill, speaking in public, had declared that if Japan attacked America Britain would declare war on her within the hour. Russia was not mentioned. To have attacked America alone would have brought in Britain, for the British public would have insisted on such a pledge being honoured; not, indeed, that there was any danger on this occasion of last minute doubts or hesitations in Downing Street. If Japan had attacked Britain alone, the United States would have been morally bound to intervene. Japan had been warned that the United States would not tolerate any interference with the *status quo* in the Pacific. This meant that if Japan attacked the Dutch East Indies, America would go to their rescue and the Washington Government could hardly have done less if Britain were attacked. Certainly a Japanese assault on the Dutch East Indian possessions would have meant an immediate declaration of war by Britain. Holland is our ally, the Dutch seamen and airmen are fighting alongside their British comrades in the west, and honour and self-interest would have precluded any other course. In the event the Royal Government of Holland, with the full support of the Dutch administration in Batavia, immediately declared war on Japan when the United States and British possessions were attacked; so did the Chungking Government on behalf of Nationalist China. One of the curiosities of this period is that during the long and sanguinary campaigns which lasted over four years on the soil of China, neither Japan nor China has declared war—each for her own good reasons.

If Japan had attacked Britain alone, she would have reaped certain immediate advantages for, with the best will in the world, the Washington Government would have had to seek the support of Congress before going to our assistance, and American isolationists were still strong enough to have imposed considerable delays. But Japan could not rely on American neutrality for long, and the whole advantage of surprise would have been lost.

The temptation to catch the Americans off their guard was too great to be resisted. In yielding to this temptation the Japanese leaders made yet another blunder. If they had attacked Britain alone, not only would the constitutional delays have hampered American counter-action, but the American public, being what it is, there would

have been schisms and divisions, some declaring that American forces should be concentrated against Germany, others counselling caution and delay; and instead of a full American effort there would have been only a sixty or seventy per cent effort, at any rate for the first six months.

The Japanese leaders, however, whatever their other miscalculations, estimated the attitude of Russia accurately. If Russia had followed the example of Holland and China by declaring war, or if she had followed by way of reprisal the Japanese example of attacking without a declaration of war, matters would have been far less easy for the Japanese High Command. At Vladivostok is a considerable Russian naval force, including a large flotilla of submarines, estimated at nearly a hundred in number. Vladivostok bears the same relation, strategically, to the Sea of Japan as Kamranh Bay does to the China Sea. Russian submarines operating from the Siberian port could have done much damage to the Japanese sea lines of communication. As already noted, the Russian Air Force would have been a real menace to the great Japanese industrial cities. Before Japan struck against the English-speaking democracies no one outside the inner circle in Tokio could know whether she would not leave Britain or America till a more convenient season and fall in with German desires and succumb to German pressure by attacking Russia only. A statesmanship devoid of prejudice would have brought Russia into the A-B-C-D alliance. For a year political conversations were in progress between America, Britain, China and the Government of the Dutch East Indies as to their attitude and actions in the event of a Japanese aggression. So far as the British, Chinese, and probably the Dutch Governments were concerned, there would have been no objection to bringing Russia into this conference and exchanging mutual assurances of assistance. Unfortunately for suffering humanity, what the Americans call 'Wall Street influence' is still powerful; and Wall Street, which means American finance and big business, aided by unaccustomed allies among certain religious leaders in America, had not yet become used to the idea of fighting Nazi Germany in alliance with Soviet Russia. Wall Street, plus certain prelates, was able to bring sufficient pressure to bear on the Washington Government and Congress to cause hesitations. True, the Lease-Lend benefits for the supply of munitions had been extended to Russia, thanks to a brilliant flash of leadership on the part of Prime Minister Winston Churchill. On 22 June 1941, on that Sunday when the civilized world learnt with a gasp of astonishment that Herr Hitler had given orders to the German armies to invade the territories of Soviet Russia, there was a great deal of mental confusion on both sides of the Atlantic. In Britain it was by no means confined to the Conservative Party and the propertied classes. Many respected members of the Labour Party and Trade Union movement had been genuinely shocked, firstly by the Pact of Non-Aggression between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, and secondly by the

Russian-Finnish campaign. Certain of these gentlemen and many of their mental counterparts in the other political parties, would have welcomed the addition of Russia to our enemies at the time of the Finnish War. There were just enough people of influence in the various parties at that time with what the Americans would call both feet on the ground to check this madness. In America, however, the hostility to Russia had been only second in intensity to that felt towards Nazi Germany.

That same night Mr. Churchill broadcast a special message to the British people. It was relayed to America, the British Dominions, and all over Europe. In that speech Mr. Churchill used both sentiment and logic as weapons with which to beat down the prejudice, fears, and suspicions which had accumulated since October 1917. Not for the first time the spoken word prevailed. This broadcast was the most successful episode in Mr. Churchill's career. In forty minutes he had made a profound impression on public sentiment everywhere. The path of the Roosevelt administration was smoothed, the Wall Street leaders and their strange ecclesiastical allies were silenced, and Russia was accepted as an ally in the great war of civilization against barbarism. The doubt, however, remained in the United States, the prejudice did not entirely die, the fears and ideologies survived, and the State Department in Washington was just not strong enough or far-seeing enough to agree to a Treaty of Mutual Assistance with Russia in the Pacific. The same influence had hampered the British Government when, after their own hesitations and delays, they decided to agree to the Russian request that war should be declared on Finland, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria who were actively assisting the Germans in their aggression. This omission or neglect to include Soviet Russia in a united front in the Pacific was certainly not the fault of the Federal Government of Australia. When I was at Canberra and Sydney at the beginning of 1939, and when every indication pointed to the inevitable result of the Munich policy being war, I discussed the Pacific situation with many Australian politicians and other leaders of public opinion. I found unanimity on two main questions: there would be fierce resistance by all parties in Australia to any proposal to appease Germany by handing back to her the great island of New Guinea, from which long-distance bombers could reach important points in Australia; and a general recognition of the danger of Japan's open policy of aggression. While we in London were talking about Japan being a source of trouble in the Far East, the Australians regarded her as the mischief-maker in the Near North. When, however, I went on to speak of a friendly Russia as a counterpoise to Japan in the Pacific, I found far less agreement. There was still a good deal of hangover in Australia in those days from the intervention period and of bitter hostility on ideological grounds to the Russian Revolution.

There had obviously been a change in opinion by December 1941. After Japan had shown her hand, Mr. Curtin, the Federal Prime

Minister, gave an important interview to the *Melbourne Herald*. It raised a storm of controversy, for Mr. Curtin's reference to the Australian Government 'looking directly to Washington for help gave rise to some misunderstanding. It is possible that the resulting controversy drew away attention from a statement of great importance by the Australian Premier in this same interview, as follows:

"When Russia was being assailed by the Axis Powers, the Australian Government put forward a proposal that a reciprocal agreement between Russia and Britain should be negotiated to meet any act of aggression by Japan. The suggestion was then regarded—wrongly, as time has proved—as premature."

There is also the Russian point of view to be considered *vis-à-vis* Japan. The German invasion resulted in the greatest battles in the whole of human history fought on Russian soil. By superhuman efforts and the most heroic sacrifices the Russian people had just managed to stem the German advance. By December 1941 the Russian armies had begun to wrest the initiative from Hitler's generals. M. Stalin and his military advisers needed every man, gun, aeroplane and round of ammunition they could scrape together to throw back and destroy the Nazi hordes. They had lost a vast territory and their people in the invaded provinces had suffered the greatest misery and privation. It is not easy to criticize a decision to concentrate all available forces to driving the hated invaders back to and over their own frontiers. Yet, regarded coldly and dispassionately, the strategical situation viewed from that standpoint alone should have dictated Russian intervention.

Yet it does not lie in the mouth of any Briton to criticize. Russia maintained her flotillas, her divisions and her aeroplane squadrons in Eastern Siberia idle while Japan proceeded to overrun British, American and Dutch territory in the Pacific. During the previous six months, while the Russian people were fighting for their very lives and existence we maintained a far larger army, a far larger fleet, a far greater air force comparatively idle at home, and shrank from the risks of relieving the pressure on the Russian armies by opening up a second front in the west. It was not only the Japanese High Command which made what Mahatma Gandhi would call 'Himalayan blunders'.

That the Japanese leaders, or that section of them able to impose the policy of war on the nation, took the greatest risks, becomes plain when we examine the nature of the forces they challenged. Though reckoned amongst the first-class Powers because of the strength of her armed forces, Japan is not a great Power in the true sense of the term. Indeed, there are only three true, or *natural*, Great Powers in the world—the United States of America, Russia, and China. All three are now ranged against her, even though Russia for the time being remained neutral. Yet Russia was helping her allies very effectively

by engaging and crippling the strongest of their enemies, as Germany.

A natural great Power must be possessed of very large territory, a very large population, great natural resources, and its people must be knit together in national or Imperial unity. Also among the Powers of the world these three fulfil the requirements. India would be a great Power, for the Peninsula has the area, population and natural resources. Her peoples are, however, disunited as throughout her history in these periods of disunity India has fallen prey to various conquerors. She was in danger of another conquest now.

Australia has the area and natural resources, but lacks the population. When that sub-continent is peopled by 100,000,000 inhabitants as it will be one day, and if they are united, racially and politically she will be a true or natural great Power.

There have in the past been *artificial* great Powers. Small States with small populations, and not possessed of vast natural resources have by their enterprise, mercantile skill and military prowess, carved out a great position for themselves. In the Middle Ages the city States of Venice and Genoa were perfect examples of artificial great Power. So were the Dutch in the seventeenth century. Great Britain would be an artificial great Power but for her Empire; the Dominions and Colonies composing the British Commonwealth are, however, scattered, and in India and some of the Colonies there is not that homogeneity and political union which would otherwise strengthen the position of the Commonwealth.

Germany is in an intermediate position. She has neither the area, population nor natural resources to rank as a natural great Power, and it was part of the policy of Hitler and the Nazi leaders to make her into a natural great Power by carving out great areas of territory in Eastern Europe, especially from Russia, and peopling them with Germans or near-Germans.

Japan is the perfect modern example of an artificial great Power. She has neither the population, area nor natural resources within the confines of the Japanese islands to be in the invulnerable position of China, Russia, or the United States of America. Japan with her army defeated, her fleet destroyed, and shorn of her conquered territories would fall back into the second or third rank of the States of the world in importance. Such a solution would be in every way desirable for the peace and progress of the world. It would not be to the liking of the Japanese leaders, especially as such a defeat would almost certainly be accompanied by a great social and economic revolution; but that is the risk her leaders have taken.

## CHAPTER III

## PEARL HARBOUR

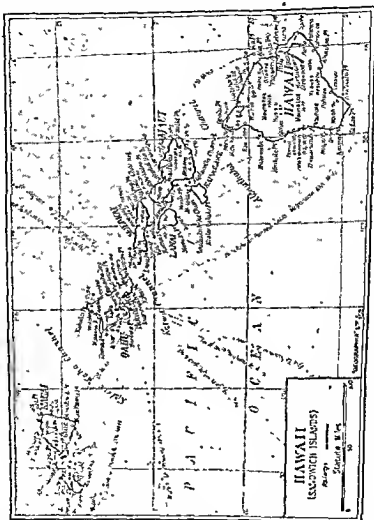
IN 1904 relations were strained between Japan and Russia. The circumstances have been described in a previous chapter. The main Russian Fleet in the Pacific was stationed at Port-Arthur. Its backbone was six battleships, which equalled the numerical strength of the Japanese line of battle. While negotiations were still in progress and before diplomatic relations had been broken off, Japanese destroyers approached the entrance to Port Arthur under cover of darkness and torpedoed two Russian battleships.

In December 1941 there were strained relations between the United States of America and Japan. Negotiations were in progress and diplomatic relations had not been broken off. At dawn on Sunday, 7 December 1941, Japanese aircraft and submarines attacked the American Fleet, shore establishments, and aerodromes in the Hawaii Islands, and sank two battleships. Thus, after thirty-seven years, the Japanese commanders used the same weapons of surprise and treachery to alter the balance of naval power in the Pacific in their favour. In both cases their mighty adversary was taken by surprise.

The Hawaiian group of islands lie a little over 2,000 miles from the Pacific coast of the United States. Of the total population of the Hawaiian islands, 450,000, one-third were Japanese or of Japanese origin. Pearl Harbour had been made into an advanced naval base for the American Pacific Fleet. The islands had been heavily fortified and strongly garrisoned, but docks capable of accommodating the largest warships had not been constructed. Important American air forces were stationed in the group. Pearl Harbour is 3,380 miles from the nearest point on the coast of Japan, and approximately 5,000 miles from the Philippines. It is 2,400 miles from San Francisco, where there is an important American naval base and dockyard with docks capable of accommodating battleships, and is 4,700 miles from the entrance to the Panama Canal. The strategical plan underlying the preparation of Pearl Harbour as a naval base was that it would be an advanced post for the Pacific Fleet to guard the west coast of North America and the Panama Canal from Japanese attack. On this understanding the necessary credits were voted by Congress for the preparation of the base.

The American Naval Staff, which has always followed a sound doctrine in its war preparations, realized that a purely defensive strategy would be insufficient. Furthermore, their problem in the Pacific was complicated by the American Protectorate over the Philippine Islands. It was a part of American national policy to train and fit the Filipinos to stand on their own feet. Great progress had

been made in the islands since their annexation from Spain in 1897, and by 1946 full independence was to have been granted. Nevertheless, even after this achievement, most Americans would have felt a responsibility for the Philippines, and however much the pacifist and



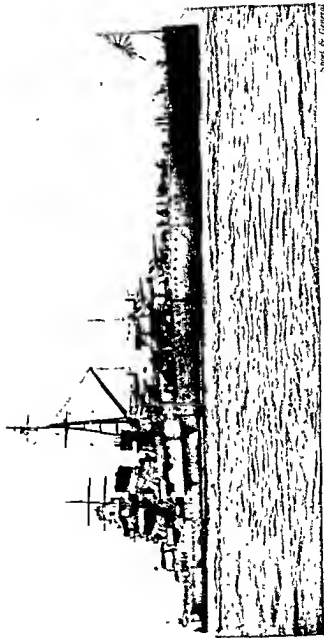
isolationist elements in the United States might have protested, the American nation could hardly have remained indifferent to Japanese aggression.

There was a period when American service opinion had accepted the difficulty of holding the Philippines in a war in which the United States was fighting Japan single-handed; but after 1935 especially, when the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 came to an end, the



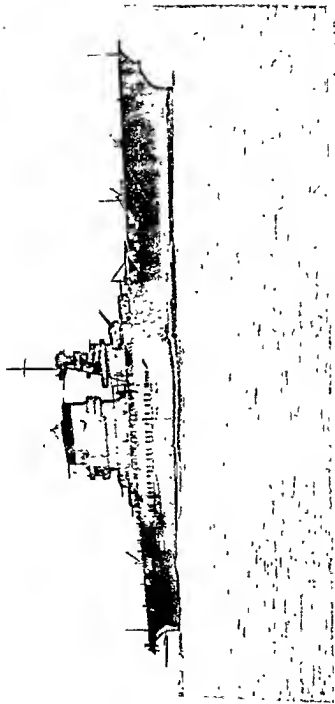
*Spot & General*  
U.S.S. "LEXINGTON," "RANGER," "YORKTOWN" AND "JENTIERPRISE";  
AEROPLANE-CARRIERS





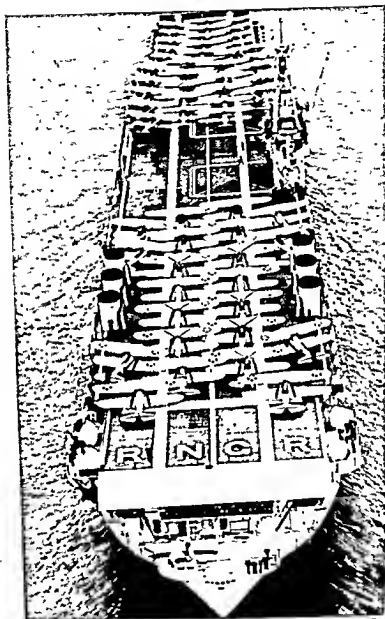
Spot & General

JAPANESE HEAVY CRUISER "ASIGARA"



*Associated Press*

U.S.S. "LEXINGTON"; AEROPLANE-CARRIER



U.S.S. "RANGER": AIRPLANE-CARRIER

Fox

necessity of being prepared to act in the defence of the Philippines had been generally accepted. This meant that in certain eventualities the main American Fleet would have had to be prepared to cross the Pacific to Manila, where for some years a small American force known as the Asiatic Fleet, had been stationed. Under modern conditions a battle fleet cannot undertake operations without the support of a flotilla of destroyers to act as a screen against submarine attack. The endurance of even the large destroyers built for the American Fleet is not sufficient for the voyage from Pearl Harbour to the Philippines to be accomplished without refuelling on the way. Refuelling can be carried out at sea, and the Americans have paid particular attention to this problem, providing numerous fast fleet oil-tankers for this purpose; but it is an unsatisfactory method at the best of times, and dependent on the weather conditions. Fortunately the United States possessions in the Pacific include a number of islands forming a chain between the Hawaiian group and the Philippines. The most important of these are Midway Island, 1,300 miles from Pearl Harbour; the next is Wake Island, 1,185 miles from Midway. From Wake Island to Guam is 1,500 miles, and the last lap of this long ocean voyage is the 1,587 miles between Guam and Manila. Midway Island also lies near the Great Circle track from Pearl Harbour to Yokohama.

For many years the United States naval staff had been pressing for the creation of naval and air bases on these islands. Under the Washington Treaty three of the signatory Powers, the United States of America, Britain, and Japan, had agreed not to create new fortifications or bases in the Pacific north of the Equator. Singapore was outside the scope of this agreement when it was decided to improve the naval base there in 1923.

There is little doubt that the Japanese made all the naval and military preparations their High Command desired in the Caroline and Marshall group of islands, which also form a chain between the Philippines and Hawaii. After 1935 the United States Naval Staff returned to the charge and sought to obtain the necessary credits for the fortification of Midway, Wake, and Guam. There was much resistance in Congress, and by December 1941 the work was not completed. Deprived of these stopping-places, or advanced bases, even the United States battleships and cruisers making the voyage from Pearl Harbour to the Philippines without refuelling would have arrived with nearly empty bunkers and, unless they could have refuelled at once at Manila, would have been in a difficult position.

The dispositions of naval forces in December 1941 was roughly as follows:

The American Pacific Fleet was at Pearl Harbour. It consisted of 12 battleships, 4 aircraft-carriers, 28 cruisers, 80 destroyers, a flotilla of submarines, and the fleet of oil-tankers, repair ships and other naval auxiliaries required for extended ocean operations. At Manila was the Asiatic Fleet, consisting of one 10,000-ton cruiser, a 7,000-ton

cruiser, 12 destroyers, 12 submarines, 1 aircraft-carrier and the necessary auxiliary vessels. At Hongkong was a small force of light British naval vessels; and at Singapore the new battleship *Prince of Wales*, the battle-cruiser *Repulse*, a small cruiser squadron, destroyers and submarines. A Dutch fleet stationed at Sourabaya comprised cruisers, destroyers and submarines supported by a considerable air force.

The remainder of the American fleet, comprising 5 battleships, 2 aircraft-carriers, 7 cruisers, over 100 destroyers and several powerful flotillas of submarines, was on the Atlantic coast assisting directly and indirectly to keep the sea lines open between the North American continent and the British Islands in the face of German attack by submarines and surface raiders.

The composition of the Japanese fleet was a closely guarded secret. It was known that there were 10 battleships, most of them old, 6 aircraft-carriers, 39 cruisers (12 of them of the heavy type), 112 destroyers and some 60 submarines. It had been strengthened by new shipbuilding, and it was known that at least 4 battleships of the largest size, reputed to be of a displacement of 40,000 tons, were under construction. In addition, it was known that Japan had built a number of warships of an intermediate type, in reality armoured cruisers of a tonnage of about 20,000, heavily armed and protected, and an improvement on the German 'pocket battleship'. It was also known that 12 large new destroyers of 2,000 tons each, and possibly more, had been added to the Japanese fleet since the outbreak of the European War. Yet, despite the additions to the Japanese Navy by new warships built with the by no means unlimited shipbuilding resources of Japan, the combined British and American fleets in the Pacific were superior in numbers and fighting power to any naval force Japan could mobilize. Fortunately, from Japan's point of view, these forces were widely separated.

The Japanese plans to meet this situation were as follows: While Mr. Kurusu and the Japanese Ambassador were going through the motions of negotiating with Mr. Cordell Hull, the American Secretary of State, an expedition was secretly launched from the Japanese naval ports towards Hawaii. The intention was to make a combined air and submarine attack on the naval base and the military airfields. The preparations for this surprise attack must have been going on for many weeks. The nearest Japanese territory to Pearl Harbour is the Marshall Islands, the most important of which is 2,168 miles away. These islands were probably the rendezvous and place of assembly for the aircraft-carriers and the parent ships carrying the small two-man submarines which were used. The air attack does not seem to have been carried out by long-range bombers, and it is doubtful if Japan possesses any types such as the American flying fortress, capable of undertaking a flight of 4,000 miles with a useful load.

On 26 November Mr. Cordell Hull had handed a memorandum

setting out the American point of view to the Japanese special envoy, Mr. Kurusu. The nature of this memorandum has already been described. The reply to this memorandum was handed to Mr. Hull exactly an hour after the attack on Pearl Harbour, allowing for the difference of time. The Japanese Government's reply rejected the Hull proposals, but contained no threat or warning of hostile acts. Previous to this there had been a friendly message from General Tojo, the Japanese Prime Minister, suggesting that the American President might care to visit Japan, and the President had sent a personal message to the Emperor appealing for peace. These conversations, exchanges of notes and sending of friendly messages were only a trick or ruse to put the United States Government and its naval and military commanders off their guard. It succeeded only too well. The attack was delivered in this way: the Japanese aircraft-carriers approached the Hawaiian islands well away from the usual shipping and air routes to within such distance in daylight that, steaming at full speed, they could reach a position about 100 miles away an hour before dawn. At dusk on the previous day the Japanese armada must, therefore, have been approximately 300 miles from Pearl Harbour. The ocean-going submarines had gone on ahead to lie in wait for American warships sailing from Pearl Harbour after the attack. The two-man submarines, one of which was captured, were probably carried in merchant ships specially fitted for the purpose, and posing as peaceful traders. These small submarines have been described as suicide ships, though the crew of two, one officer and one man, had a chance of escape. The one captured was 41 feet long, with a five-foot beam, and a conning-tower built four-and-a-half feet above the deck. It was constructed of quarter-inch plate, and divided into five compartments. The speed was 24 knots, and the cruising range, at a low speed, about 200 miles. The armaments consisted of two 18-inch torpedoes and a 300-lb. charge of high explosive. The method of attack would be to launch the torpedoes in the usual way and for the submarine herself then to be used as a torpedo, the explosive charge bursting on impact, the crew of two having previously escaped by the aid of apparatus similar to our own Davis helmet or simply jumping overboard with lifebelts with the submarine on the surface.

The bombers and torpedo-carrying planes attacked in three waves. The first two arrived at dawn. They found the American Pacific fleet, the anti-aircraft battery crews, and the flying personnel of the army aerodromes completely unprepared on that peaceful Sunday morning. Except for a few watchmen, the whole vast garrison, naval personnel and official population, was in bed and asleep. The warship crews had been given the usual shore leave and forty per cent of the seamen had gone to Honolulu for the week-end. Many of them had their wives and families there. On the flying fields even the elementary precaution of dispersing the aircraft had not been taken. They lay snugly in their hangars, or parked close together on the tarmac. The

great fleet, the flower of the American Navy, lay moored in the harbour, the destroyers in particular tied up alongside one another, as sailors call it, like sardines in a tin. In all the circumstances it is extraordinary that more damage was not done. It was serious enough as it was. One battleship, the *Arizona*, was blown up and sunk, and the other, the *Oklahoma*, was damaged and capsized, but it was officially announced that she would be raised and repaired. An old battleship, the *Utah*, completed in 1909, was also sunk. She had been demilitarized and used as a wireless control target ship. This old veteran performed a last service to America by acting as a target for Japanese torpedo-carrying aeroplanes, the pilots of which mistook her for a fighting ship.

Three destroyers, the *Cassin*, *Downes* and *Shaw*, and the mine-layer *Oglada* went to the bottom. A number of other vessels were more or less severely damaged. Details have quite properly been withheld by the American naval authorities. Though the tally of ships actually destroyed is a short one, the number damaged and needing considerable repair was much larger and the effect much the same as if the Pacific Fleet had fought a pitched battle at sea. The most badly damaged ships could be dealt with by the naval establishments on the spot, but the repair facilities at Pearl Harbour were insufficient to do the whole of this work and certain vessels had to be withdrawn to Puget Sound and San Francisco on the American mainland. The *Arizona* was a battleship of 33,000 tons, completed in 1916, and had been completely reconstructed. Her principal armament was twelve 14-inch guns. Colonel Knox described her loss as due to a lucky hit. Apparently a bomb fell down one of the funnels and exploded in the boiler, and another bomb penetrated to the forward magazine. The *Oklahoma* was a vessel of 29,000 tons completed in May 1916. She carried the standard American main armament of those days of twelve 14-inch guns. She had also been modernized and reconstructed. The reported loss of life was heavy, 91 officers and 2,638 ratings were killed, and 656 were wounded. The garrison shore and air establishments lost about 1,700 men. The army casualties were 168 killed, 223 wounded, and 26 missing. There were also heavy civilian casualties.<sup>1</sup>

The loss of aircraft on the ground and in the hangars was most serious, though these could be more quickly replaced than the lost or damaged warships. Fortunately the dry docks, oil storage-tanks and the principal repairing workshops escaped damage. The attackers lost 3 submarines, one of the ocean-going type and 2 of the small 2-man type. They also lost 41 aircraft.

There are varying accounts as to how many Japanese aircraft took part in this assault. Colonel Knox, on his return to the United States after visiting Hawaii, said that he thought the number used for the attack was between 150 and 300. All were single-engine

<sup>1</sup> President Roosevelt in his broadcast to the American nation on 22 February 1942 gave the figures as 2,340 killed and 946 wounded.

aeroplanes and none was shore-based so far as his information went. This goes to show that they were all shipborne and flown from carriers. Nor were aeroplanes or submarines the only Japanese weapons used. There is a large Japanese population in the islands, as already noted, and these had been organized into an efficient Fifth Column and espionage service. On the receipt of this sombre news, the President appointed a strong Board, under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Roberts, to proceed to the Islands and investigate. Their report was made public on 24 January, 1942.

The report makes it clear that on the day of Admiral Stark's warning to Admiral Kimmel, commanding at Pearl Harbour, the chief of military intelligence advised the army officials in Hawaii that peace negotiations with Japan "have practically ceased, that hostilities might ensue, and that subversive activity might be expected." Admiral Kimmel and Lieutenant-General Short,<sup>1</sup> the army commander in Hawaii, both of whom were replaced soon after the attack, were described as 'derelict' in failing to consult and confer with one another about the warnings and "the appropriate measures of defence required by the imminence of hostilities. The attitude of each, that he was not required to inform himself of, and his lack of interest in, the measures undertaken by the other to carry out the responsibility assigned to them under the provisions of plans then in effect, demonstrated on the part of each lack of appreciation of the responsibilities vested in them, and inherent in their positions as Commander-in-chief of the Pacific Fleet and Commanding General of the Hawaiian Department. On the contrary, they served only to emphasize in their minds the danger from sabotage and surprise submarine attack. The necessity for taking a state of war readiness which would have been required to avert or to meet an air raid was not considered. Admiral Kimmel and General Short, as well as the commandant of the 14th Naval District, Rear-Admiral G. G. Bloch, and their senior subordinates and principal staff officers, had considered the possibility of air raids, but without exception they believed the chances of such raids while the Pacific Fleet was based upon Pearl Harbour were practically nil. The attack on 7 December was, therefore, a complete surprise to each of them."

The Commission, discussing the activities of Japanese spies and agents, said it was apparent that the Japanese obtained complete information through their intelligence service. It was believed that the Japanese Consulate at Honolulu served as a centre of espionage activity. The previous summer over two hundred Japanese consular agents were acting there. In some way the enemy apparently knew that no task force of the Navy—a force specially detailed for patrol or operations—was anywhere in sectors north-east, north or north-west of the Hawaiian Islands. They evidently knew, also, that no distant aeroplane reconnaissance was maintained in any sector, and

<sup>1</sup> Admiral Kimmel and General Short were court-martialled for dereliction of duty.



that up to 6 December no inshore air patrol was being maintained around Cahu Island.

The Japanese knew the exact location of vital airfields, hangars and other structures, and where certain important naval vessels would be berthed. "Their fliers," goes on the report, "had the most detailed maps, courses and bearings, so that each could attack a given vessel or field. Each seems to have been given a specified mission."

Apparently noting rumours that a large portion of the Service personnel were on week-end leave at the time of the attack, the report made it clear that officers and men of both services were present in sufficient numbers and in fit condition to perform any duty. Among contributory causes to the disaster, the report mentioned the failure of the War Department to reply to a message relating to anti-sabotage measures taken by General Short and to non-receipt by the commanders in Hawaii prior to the attack of a warning message sent shortly before the outbreak of hostilities.

The report agreed it was true that there was a deficiency of material in the Hawaiian area because of the enormous demands on the nation's supplies; but it said that this deficiency "did not affect the critical fact of failure to take appropriate measures with the means available."

Concerning the attack itself, the report said that a available information indicated that either three or four aircraft-carriers, some supporting surface craft, and a few small submarines were employed and approached from the north. The United States ship *Antares* sighted a suspicious object off Pearl Harbour at 6.30 a.m. on the day of the attack. This was identified as a submarine, which was sunk by a naval patrol plane and the United States ship *Ward*. A report of this action reached the naval base watch officer at 7.12 a.m., and he notified his chief of staff, but no alert warnings were issued. Forty-three minutes later, at 7.55 a.m., the Pearl Harbour attack began with anything from 150 to 200 Japanese planes taking part. Torpedoes launched from the planes were credited with most of the damage to ships in the harbour. The permanent installation of aircraft warning systems had not been completed on 7 December, but some temporary installations had been made. The system shut down at 7 a.m. on the fateful Sunday, but a non-commissioned officer who had been training remained at one station, and at 7.2 a.m. he discovered that there was a large flight of planes slightly east of north of Cahu, about 130 miles away. This was reported to an army lieutenant 18 minutes later, but the lieutenant assumed the planes were friendly and took no action.

The Board said there was sufficient partially trained personnel available on 27 November to operate the warning system for twenty-four hours a day. Admiral Kimmel, it was said, assumed that the system was being fully operated by the army, but made no inquiry to confirm it in spite of the receipt of warnings from Washington.

When the enemy planes appeared, General Short ordered a maximum alert, while Admiral Kimmel placed the fleet on a full war basis and ordered it to try to intercept and destroy the attacking force. The report concludes with the observation that 'the morale of officers and enlisted men was high'.

Why were the naval and military commanders in the Hawaiian islands taken so completely by surprise? The United States Government had information of an impending attack on the British possessions in the Pacific, and had given a friendly warning to the British Government to be on the alert in Malaya and Hongkong ten days before. Relations with Japan were certainly strained, and many signs pointed to an impending aggression. That there was blame attachable to the senior officers concerned is shown by the removal and trial by court-martial of the naval and military commanders following on the report of the Navy Secretary of State. The general complacency of the United States Government and public where Japan was concerned had obviously infected the American services. All eyes were on Nazi Germany. The American Navy had been itching to get at the Nazi sea marauders for a long time, and American warships had been gradually edging into the Atlantic struggle for some months. The general opinion throughout America was that Japan was bluffing, at any rate where the United States was concerned. Her commitments in China, her economic strains and stresses and, of course, the Kurusu peace mission, had all contributed to this belief. The fleet commanders and military chiefs had relied on the immense distances of the Pacific to give them immunity or at least warning. The main neglect was the failure to carry out air reconnaissances. It would have been more prudent to have carried out daylight sweeps with flying-boats or long-range aircraft over the sea areas into which the aircraft carriers would have had to enter in order to reach their forward positions before the final night dash for the dawn attack. Such reconnaissance was apparently not in operation.

The only American plane in the air over the islands at the time of the attack was the private, unarmed machine of an American resident. This gentleman, a local lawyer and an enthusiastic aviator, had taken his little plane up for an early morning pleasure flight. When a squadron of Japanese planes swept towards him, he waved them a friendly greeting, which was answered with machine-gun bullets. The amateur aviator was uninjured. Let us hope he is now flying an American bomber.

The redeeming feature of the whole tragedy was the splendid behaviour of the American soldiers and sailors when the bombs fell. Such aircraft as could took off the moment their crews could get the engines running, the guns of the ships and shore batteries were manned, and when the third wave of attackers appeared two hours after the first attack they were met by such a barrage of gunfire from the ships and the shore that every one of them turned tail without dropping a

single bomb or torpedo. In Colonel Knox's own words, thirty minutes' warning would have made all the difference in the world.

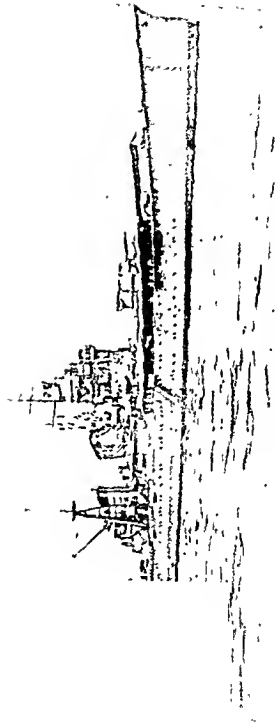
The immediate effects of this successful treachery were highly favourable to the Japanese cause. Combined with the sinking of the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* off Singapore a few days later, they had now virtual command of the seas in the Western Pacific. How this command of the seas was exploited will be described. A simultaneous attack was made on the three advanced American bases of Guam, Midway, and Wake; Guam and Wake fell to the attackers, despite the heroic resistance of the defenders, before the crippled American Pacific Fleet could come to the rescue. These advanced posts were lightly garrisoned and practically unfortified, except for shore batteries at Guam. Wake also had artillery, and its reduction cost the enemy one cruiser, four destroyers, a submarine and a gunboat. Guam held out for six days, and Wake for sixteen. The full-scale invasion of the Philippines, Malaya, Hongkong and Borneo was undertaken with impunity.

There was another result of this surprise attack on Pearl Harbour. As soon as the news had spread through the States of the Union, the American people responded with an outburst of fury and wounded pride which united the whole nation as probably no other event could have done. The large isolationist and pacifist minority fell into line with the interventionists. The Senate voted for war with Japan unanimously, and the House of Representatives supported the Senate with only one dissident. The declaration of war on the United States by Germany and Italy only fanned the flames of fury. The United States with its vast population, immense resources in natural wealth and raw materials and the greatest manufacturing potential in the world, swung into war in complete national unity. Seventeen nations followed the United States in accepting the Japanese challenge, including the whole of the British Commonwealth, Holland and China. Whatever their immediate advantages, the men who planned the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour and their rulers who approved it, had committed another 'Himalayan blunder'.

## CHAPTER IV

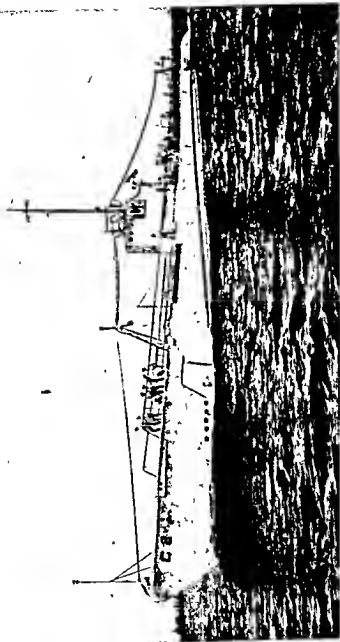
### SHANGHAI AND HONGKONG

THE first shots by Japanese against Britons and Britons against Japanese were fired in the river at Shanghai, and they were exchanged between the Japanese cruiser *Idzuma*, flying the flag of a Japanese Admiral, and a small British gunboat, the *Peterel*. The *Idzuma* was a 9,000-ton armoured cruiser of old type but with the



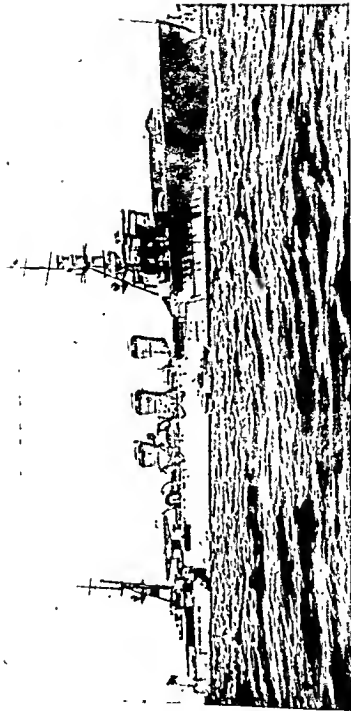
JAPANESE CRUISER "HAGURO"

*Spad & General*



U.S. SUBMARINE "CUTTLEFISH"

Planet



JAPANESE LIGHT CRUISER "KUMA"

*Spot & General*



U.S.S. "NORTH CAROLINA": BATTLESHIP

Short and General

formidable armament of four 8-inch guns, eight 6-inch guns, and some smaller weapons. The *Peterel* was little more than a river launch, armed with two machine-guns.

For half a century it had been the British practice to maintain a number of river gunboats on the Yangtsekiang, and on the West river and other inland waterways between Hongkong and Canton. They looked after British interests, protected trade and missionaries, and were really a kind of river police. They were all shallow draught lightly armed ships. All were withdrawn on the outbreak of the European War in 1939 and two of them did good service in the Libyan campaigns against the Italians. In order to preserve the right to maintain gunboats on the Yangtse, the *Peterel* was commissioned, armed with her two machine-guns and placed under the command of a retired river pilot, Lieutenant-Commander Polkinghorne, R.N.V.R.

In the early morning of 7 December the *Peterel* was lying at her buoy only a few hundred feet from the big Japanese warship. Half her crew were on shore leave. The Japanese having boarded the United States gunboat *Wake*, and captured her by surprise, summoned the *Peterel* to surrender. Commander Polkinghorne replied by manning his two machine-guns and opening fire on the Japanese flagship. One salvo from the *Idzuma* and the *Peterel* went down with her colours flying. A few survivors were picked up and taken prisoner. The old river pilot now belongs to history with Grenville of the *Revenge*, Fegan of the *Jervis Bay*, and Kennedy of the *Rawalpindi*. The enemy followed up this easy success by seizing such British and American merchant shipping as lay in the river and occupying the International Settlement.

The wealthy city of Shanghai, with its fine buildings and immense trade, built by British enterprise and energy on what had been desolate mud flats, and in which British interests were still predominant, became a Japanese spoil of war. They had long coveted the second most important trading centre in China.

Shanghai, the Paris of the East, as it was called even when I knew it in the early days of this century, has had a chequered career. It had the double advantage of being an ideal centre for the entrepôt trade, being situated at the mouth of the Yangtse, and of being, as regards the International Settlement, outside Chinese jurisdiction. It was governed by a municipal council elected on a property basis, and because the British were the largest property holders they held the majority on this council. As is usually the case with revolutions, the fall of the Manchu Dynasty in 1911 and the establishment of a republic resulted in an outburst of somewhat extravagant nationalism. Also; there was, in effect, a second revolution in China between 1926 and 1928. The old Chinese demand for the rendition of the foreign concessions was pressed, and in 1937 we found it advisable to give up the important British concession at Hankow, the great river port on the Yangtse. A similar demand for the rendition of the Inter-



national Settlement and the separate French concession at Shanghai backed up by the approach of Chinese armies, was met by the dispatch of British, American, Japanese, French, and Italian troops to force the Settlement police and the local volunteer force recruited from Europeans. Matters were smoothed over, relations between the Treaty Powers and the Chinese Republican Government improved and most of the foreign troops were gradually withdrawn except the Japanese. These were increased in numbers and, as stated in the previous chapter, were used in 1932 as a striking force against Chinese authorities in Greater Shanghai. This is the Chinese area which surrounds the International and French Settlements.

The bund, or river front, at Shanghai, looks like one side of Broadway, New York. Magnificent blocks of offices, hotels, clubs, residences face the river, where congregate the ships of all nations trading with the great Chinese markets. Most of the overseas cargo is transhipped at Shanghai, being sent inland in smaller vessels. The foreign merchants and bankers, mostly British, did their business through Chinese compradores or agents, who acted as go-betweens for the importing and exporting firms and the Chinese wholesalers in the interior. There are fine hospitals, good schools, theatres, cinemas, and a lively social life. Race-courses, country clubs, golf links, recreation grounds and beautiful parks are a feature of this extraordinary community.

It was generally believed that there was more vice in Shanghai and Greater Shanghai than in any other city of the world. I suspect this was a libel, and the very mixed population was no better and no worse than in any other Oriental city. The sailor's word 'shanghaied', originated in the bad custom of the local boarding-house keepers of selling drugged seamen to masters of sailing-ships short of crew.

During the last fifty years of China's troubled history, Shanghai has been a convenient refuge for political fugitives from the party in power. Kuomintang leaders and republicans fled there from the vengeance of the Emperor's police. After the fall of the Manchus the upholders of the old Empire found sanctuary in their turn. After 1937 and the Japanese attempt to conquer China, Chinese leaders from the Japanese occupied territories found a haven of refuge. All parties kept their reserves of wealth in the International Settlements, including the leading Chinese banks. There was rich loot and many victims for the temporary conquerors.

An even greater centre of British influence in China was the colony of Hongkong. In January 1841 the island was ceded by the Chinese Government to Great Britain, and this was confirmed by the Treaty of Nankin in August 1842. The island itself is hilly, eleven miles long and from two to five miles wide, and separated from the mainland by a narrow strait of deep water which at Lyemun Pass, the narrowest part, is only a quarter of a mile wide. The total area of the island

thirty-two square miles, and when the British went there it was treeless, barren, and one of the most unhealthy places in the world. Its commercial importance was due to its situation near the mouth of the river joining the great city of Canton to the sea. The first attempt to found a settlement on the south side of the island was a failure. I have seen there the melancholy memorial to an entire British battalion which perished of fever. From the colonel downwards every officer and soldier has a separate grave.

The climate was improved by afforestation. Trees were planted on the hills and it is now quite healthy. An important naval station was established on the north side of the island facing the mainland and around it grew up a great city. On 9 June 1898 the Kowloon territory on the mainland opposite, 356 square miles in extent, was leased for 99 years. When the island was ceded to Britain it was inhabited by a few fishermen and in June 1939 had a population of 1,050,000 excluding the naval and military force. Of this population 1,026,360 were Chinese. Hongkong became the greatest shipping port in the whole world, more important than Liverpool or Hamburg. In the same year, 1939, 29,000,000 tons of shipping entered and cleared, of which 10,000,000 tons flew the Red Ensign. The city of Victoria on the island, and of Kowloon on the mainland were fine, well-built, well-managed communities. Above the city of Victoria the wooded heights known as the Peak district are studded with fine residences, many of them owned by prosperous Chinese citizens. Some British merchants who had made fortunes in Hongkong retired to the home country where, generally speaking, they were not so happy as their wiser contemporaries who settled down on the Peak overlooking the city where they had made their fortunes. Before Singapore was developed into a first-class naval base, Hongkong was the principal port for the British fleet on the China station. A good dockyard was built on the Kowloon side with naval and commercial docks capable of accommodating large warships and merchant ships, but not big enough to take the latest types of super-dreadnought.

In normal times the garrison consisted of two battalions of British troops, one or two battalions of Indian troops, and artillerymen and engineers for service in the shore batteries. Up till 1922, when there was an alliance with Japan, the defence problem at Hongkong was simple enough. There was no threat from the Chinese on the mainland. Even during the Boxer Rebellion at the end of last century, when there was a violent anti-foreign movement in North and Central China, there was little or no trouble in Hongkong or the leased territory on the mainland. In 1934 Japan denounced the Washington Naval Treaty and resumed her generally aggressive policy in the Pacific. The possibility of an Anglo-Japanese war had to be considered. The Committee of Imperial Defence, which for thirty or more years prior to September 1939 advised successive British Governments on naval and military measures in the Colonies, may or may not have

given sound advice with regard to the defence of Hongkong. If the advice was good, it was not acted upon. The defence scheme was grotesque. On 12 October 1938 the Japanese invaded South China and landed in Bias Bay just outside British territory and overran the surrounding countryside. Formerly we used Bias Bay for target practice and fleet exercises in the China squadron, and I know the neighbourhood well.

On 21 October the Japanese Army occupied Canton. The threat to Hongkong was self-evident. There is railway communication from Kowloon to Canton and road communication as well. The roads in Kowloon and the leased territory, built by the British, were suitable for motor traffic at all seasons of the year.

If Hongkong was to be held against a Japanese attack from the mainland a very large garrison was required. There is no room on the hilly island for a landing ground for aircraft; but a first-rate aerodrome was constructed on British territory on the Kowloon side. A perimeter of hills some fifteen miles in length forms a natural defence position on the mainland. This line of steep hills could have been very strongly fortified. There was ample Chinese labour available. The same type of Chinese coolies who built the Burma Road, one of the finest engineering feats of modern times, could have constructed practically impregnable fortifications. A large garrison was, however, required. Reinforcements had been sent to Hongkong when the situation in the Pacific began to grow critical, and two battalions of Canadians had arrived in the Colony shortly before the Japanese declaration of war.

With British reinforcements, the garrison consisted of 4000 British, 2000 Canadians, and 2000 Indian soldiers, or less than a division, to hold the leased territory and the island. There was a local volunteer force of about 6000 theoretically open to recruitment from all races but actually almost entirely European, and a small force of armed police—Sikhs, British, and Chinese. The only way to make Hongkong safe from Japanese attack was to have a holding force of at least 60,000 well-armed troops. This was the minimum to hold the mainland defence line and the island itself. Neither British, Canadian nor Indian troops to this number were available in view of our commitments elsewhere. The common-sense policy would have been to recruit a large army from the million Chinese British subjects and the many thousands of Chinese refugees who had sought sanctuary in the territory. Failure to do this and the neglect to erect really powerful fortifications on the mainland were grave mistakes of policy.

The reason is, unhappily, only too clear. The old Imperialist idea was that a handful of white soldiers should garrison our Colonial possessions and Protectorates and any large scale arming of the native population was to be discouraged. However well this system worked in the nineteenth century it was utterly unsuitable for the conditions prevailing in Hongkong, and in Malaya for that matter,

in the fourth decade of the twentieth century. If we had held Hongkong it would have been a kind of Tobruk on the Japanese flank and an invaluable bridgehead for future operations when the fortunes of war began to shape in our favour. Another alternative was to accept the offer of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek to lend us Chinese troops. He actually offered to send us ten divisions of trained soldiers to hold the Kowloon mainland, but we had to arm them.

It is true that, for not very creditable reasons, there was, in December 1941, still a woeful shortage of munitions for the British war effort. It can be admitted that we started short of equipment and that the first necessity was to arm the expeditionary force which it was finally decided, in the spring of 1939, would be sent to France in case of a German attack. It is also true that we had lost a great deal of equipment in the evacuations of Norway, Dunkirk, Greece and Crete; it is also true that important supplies of arms had gone to Russia; but the munition-making industries in most of the world were at our disposal. We could have purchased arms on the Continent of Europe and in South America and even from Japan herself in those years. It is a fact that in 1939-40 modern equipment and weapons in large quantities could have been purchased in Japan for cash. Offers to sell such arms were actually made in London and refused. Furthermore, there was a considerable engineering industry in Hongkong. The Chinese make good skilled workmen. A munition-making industry should have been established in the Colony and in Singapore also as soon as the danger signals began to fly in the Pacific or even after the Munich crisis in Europe in 1938. Over and above all these considerations the British nation was supposed to have been re-arming for six years prior to these events, and no satisfactory explanation has yet been provided for our continued shortage of weapons and equipment. In the event we neither accepted the Chinese Government's offer of trained soldiers, nor recruited and trained our own fellow-subjects amongst the Hongkong Chinese. The only explanation I can find is that certain permanent officials in the Colonial Office clung to the out-of-date idea that it was 'dangerous to arm the natives'. So we chose the far greater danger of leaving Hongkong open and virtually undefended from October 1938 onwards, when the whole of the hinterland was in Japanese occupation and when Japanese troops were massed on the frontier of the leased territory.

There was another alternative. It was to abandon Hongkong because of its exposed position. Certainly the colony was isolated, especially after the Japanese had established themselves in French Indo-China, and had acquired the harbours of Saigon and Kamranh on the flank of the sea route between Singapore and Hongkong. The Japanese had air bases on Chinese territory between Canton and Hongkong, a naval and air base to the north in the Pescadore Islands in the middle of the Formosa Strait, and air and naval bases on Formosa Island itself. If the Americans could not hold the

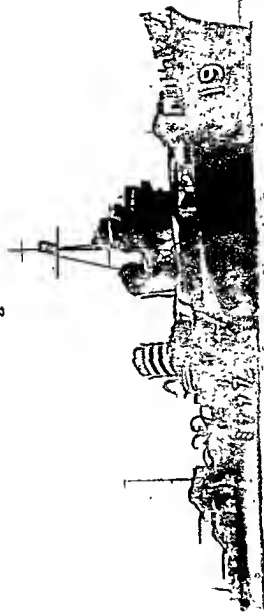
to press forward, but in the afternoon our forward troops on the Taipo Road withdrew into the prepared "Gindrunkers Line". On Castle Peak Road, reconnaissance patrols made no contact with the enemy, but at about 11 o'clock that morning Sing Mun Redoubt (which had been held by a platoon of the Royal Scots) was captured by the enemy in a surprise attack; otherwise, 'Gindrunkers Line' remained



intact. Thus the enemy's progress was confined to establishing the pocket south of Jubilee Reservoir, and though the Japanese made attempts on 10 December to break through towards the Taipo Road, they were unsuccessful. As reserves had been used in this fighting it was decided that a readjustment of the line was necessary, and this was carried out successfully at dusk, the Royal Scots being established on the Golden Hill Line to Lai Chi Tok peninsula. On this day Tai Tak, Hongkong's only aerodrome, was evacuated after demolition of the plant and obstruction of the ground.

On the morning of 11 December strong enemy pressure developed on our left flank held by the Royal Scots; the two left companies

6



*JAPANESE DESTROYER "ATANAMI"*

*Spot & General*

Philippines, or if America was neutral, Hongkong would certainly be in a difficult position in the event of an Anglo-Japanese war. It has been argued that the naval, military and air forces defending the colony could have been better employed in Malaya. To have surrendered Hongkong without a fight would have been a policy of dishonour and defeatism. Though many of the European women were evacuated from Hongkong when the Japanese attitude became ugly, it was hardly practicable to evacuate the Chinese women and children, and we had a million Chinese fellow-subjects for whom we were responsible. Apart from considerations of strategy and prestige, it would have been a policy of cowardice to give up Hongkong without making a fight for it. We scuttled from the Channel Islands without firing a shot. One such scandal is enough for any war.

The actual defence scheme decided upon was puerile. Let me quote here from the House of Lords *Hansard* of 8 January 1942 (*Volume 121, No. 15*). Answering my interpolations after the fall of Hongkong as to the defence scheme, Lord Moyne, Secretary of State for the Colonies, replied as follows:

"Lord Strabolgi asked many questions about Hongkong, of which he has close personal knowledge. He will understand that we have few details as to what actually took place, and he probably knows just as much as we do from the statements which have appeared in the Press from the members of the garrison who made their way into Chinese territory. We do know, however, that the plan for creating a strong defensive line had been carried out on the mainland. That line was about fifteen miles in length covered by pill-boxes in depth and sited about six or seven miles from Kowloon on very favourable hilly ground. It was never intended that the main line of defence should be on the mainland. The plan always was that this line should be held long enough to allow the evacuation of Kowloon and the destruction of the great docks and engineering establishments which existed in Kowloon. We have every reason to believe that that plan was carried out, and that demolitions were effected before evacuation took place."

So there we have the defence scheme for Hongkong exposed in all its rottenness. There was to be no real attempt to hold the mainland, but it was supposed that the island could stand a siege. There would be no air defence because the only British aerodrome would have been surrendered. The Japanese, as indeed happened, would have been able to bring up heavy guns facing the island and batter the great sprawling city of Victoria at their leisure. It would have been as sensible to try and hold the City of Westminster with two brigades of troops with a large hostile army established at Lambeth. Whoever advised the British Cabinet to adopt this defence scheme was utterly unfitted for the job. How the scheme came to be approved at all is a mystery. If our system of Government produces ministers,

civil servants and senior staff officers capable of such foolishness, there is something radically wrong with the system.

More than £8,000,000 had been spent on shore batteries, anti-aircraft and other defences for Hongkong from 1935 onwards. The fortress fell in eighteen days, despite the fortitude of the Governor and the heroic resistance of the garrison. As in all their operations in the Pacific, the Japanese army had made careful preparations for this assault. The actual attack had been rehearsed for a year by the shock troops which led the operation. Particulars of the forts had been obtained and models made of them on hills as nearly as possible of the height and shape of the high ground on the islands. Three companies of infantry were formed from expert swimmers. They it was who swam across the narrowest part of the channel dividing the island from the mainland and gained a footing on the shore.

The attack began by an air raid in the early morning of 8 December, made by twenty bombers. An alarm was sounded, but the general populace were ignorant of the fact that hostilities had broken out between Japan and America and thought it was only a practice. When the planes came in sight crowds gathered in the streets and on the balconies of buildings to see the spectacle, and remained there until the bombs fell on the port area. There was a second raid at two o'clock that afternoon, when the aerodrome, docks and port installations were attacked. Anti-British pamphlets urging the Chinese to throw in their lot with Japan were dropped in large numbers. They produced no effect whatsoever. The Chinese at Hongkong had no more desire to throw in their lot with Japan than their 490,000,000 compatriots of the Republic of China.

The garrison of Hongkong consisted of the 2nd battalion Royal Scots, 1st battalion Middlesex regiment, one battalion of Winnipeg Grenadiers, one battalion Royal Rifles of Canada, the 2/14th battalion of Punjabis and the 5/7th battalion Rajputs, together with the Hongkong Volunteer Defence Force and the normal complement of Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers, Royal Signals, and ancillary services. Units of the Royal Navy and of the Hongkong Volunteer Reserve and detachments of Royal Marines co-operated with the military forces. As stated above, these forces totalled some 8,000 regular troops and 6,000 local volunteers.

During the morning of 8 December Japanese forces, estimated at one division, with a second division in immediate reserve, crossed the frontier of the Leased Territories on the mainland. In all, six Japanese divisions of 15,000 men each, supported by dive bombers and other air forces, and by warships, took part in the operations. All our demolitions were successful and our troops withdrew 'according to plan'. Patrols were active on both sides, and a Bren Carrier patrol ambushed and annihilated a Japanese platoon on Castle Peak Road, in which operations a Chinese company of sappers played a leading part. During daylight on 9 December the enemy made no attempt





JAPANESE AIRCRAFT-CARRIER "KAGA"

Spot & General



*Associated Press*

U.S.S. "SAN FRANCISCO", HEAVY CRUISER



**JAPANESE BATTLESHIP "YAMASHIRO"**

*Spart & General*

were driven in by heavy and accurate mortar fire. The situation was, however, stabilized by the use of all available reserves, including a company of the Winnipeg Grenadiers. The Royal Scots nevertheless suffered severe casualties. By midday it was decided that the time had come for the mainland, except for the Devil's Peak position, to be evacuated under cover of darkness. The withdrawal to the island was successfully carried out despite some rioting in the streets of Kowloon, and despite constant pressure by superior numbers of the enemy, who were quick to turn the flanks of our small units. During the night, two companies of the 2nd-14th battalion Punjabis lost contact, but they concentrated successfully on Devil's Peak peninsula, one company being evacuated early on the evening of 12 December. Stonecutters island was heavily bombarded all day, but our casualties were slight. The island was evacuated during the night of 11-12 December, after the necessary demolitions had been successfully carried out. Early the next day all our troops were back on the island of Hongkong, except for one battalion of Rajputs and one mountain battery of the Royal Artillery on Devil's Peak, as well as part of a battalion of Punjabis. These, however, were successfully evacuated on the night of 12-13 December. The island was subjected to sporadic bombardment by artillery and from the air, but casualties were few.

December 13 was a difficult day. Shelling increased in intensity and accuracy, and various guns and searchlights were put out of action. The enemy appeared to be collecting launches and junks in Kowloon, and some activity was observed on Lamma Island. The enemy sent a delegation to negotiate surrender, but the proposal was immediately rejected by the Governor, Sir Mark Young. His bearing and fortitude throughout were an inspiration to the garrison, and a fine example to the whole of our Empire.

On 14 December there was systematic shelling by the enemy and this was extremely accurate when directed against old and well-known batteries; battery positions recently sited were apparently still not located. Bomb damage was negligible. The next day it was reported that more than half of the pill-boxes between Lyemun and Bowrington were out of action. A column of enemy motor and mule transport was effectively dispersed near Customs Pass and a troop concentration was scattered in Waterloo Road. Movements of the enemy towards High Junk and Clear Water Bay areas were seen, and further parties were observed to have landed on Lamma Island. On 16 December, aerial bombing and artillery shelling were on an increased scale, with a high standard of accuracy on military objectives. One enemy aircraft was brought down into the sea. That night there was heavy enemy mortar fire along the water-front between Star Ferry and Taikoo, resulting in damage to four machine-guns. On 17 December aerial bombardment was directed against the Peak wireless telegraphy station and other places, but no military damage was done. Our

counter-battery fire silenced a section of enemy artillery on Devil's Peak, another on Gun Club Hill, and three mortars on the water-front. On this day the enemy sent staff officers to the island under a flag of truce bearing, for the second time, a written proposal for our surrender. This demand was similarly rejected. The next night the enemy succeeded in crossing the bare 500 yards of intervening water, and in landing on Hongkong Island in the Taikoo area and Lyemun, whence they steadily infiltrated to Wong Nei Chang Gap and Tytam Gap. Stanley Peninsula and the hill northwards as far as a line running east and west through Stanley Mound was held by one battalion of Canadians, two companies of Indian infantry and a scratch force of gunners and machine-gunners. The situation was obscure, but Lyemun and Saiwan were overrun. The artillery personnel of Forts Collinson and D'Aguilar were successfully withdrawn to Stanley after the destruction of the heavy guns there. On the afternoon of 19 December a counter attack was attempted to regain Mount Parker, Mount Butler and Jardines Island, but this was unsuccessful.

By now the civilian population was perfectly calm, but the troops were growing very tired, and problems of supply and communication were difficult. On 22 December the enemy landed further troops on the north-east coast and attacked continuously. A counter-attack on 21 December from Stanley towards Ty Tam Tak had failed, although a certain number of the enemy were killed at the cost of about a hundred Canadian casualties. A counter-attack by a company of Winnipeg Grenadiers to retake Wong Nei Chang Gap also failed in the face of concentrated mortar and light machine-gun fire which inflicted heavy casualties.

The island was now roughly split into three parts: an isolated British force in Stanley, the enemy to the east of the Gap, and the British to the west with small pockets of British remnants holding out in isolated positions. The water and transport situation was critical, and it was not possible to replenish ammunition supply as necessary. On 23 December, for the twenty-four hours ending at five in the evening, the enemy had kept up incessant attacks accompanied by intensive bombardments from the air and by mortars and artillery. Some ground on Mount Cameron which was lost during the night was recaptured by the Royal Marines, but counter-attacks by the force at Stanley towards Stanley Mound failed. However, the Middlesex regiment successfully repulsed a determined attack at Leighton Hill.

It was by now impossible to conceal the fact that the situation had become extremely serious. The troops, who had been fighting unceasingly for many days, were tired out, but their spirits remained high, for they realized that every day of their resistance was so much gained for the allied cause. Their water and food supply was desperate, for the reservoirs and depots were in enemy hands. On

25 December the military and naval commanders informed the Governor that no further effective resistance could be made. Pourparlers were accordingly opened with the enemy, and the capitulation followed.

Hongkong fell through lack of man power and, as already explained, there was a vast reserve of man power ready to hold the invaders, but not enrolled and trained. The Chinese Government made a gallant attempt to relieve the colony on the land side and nearly succeeded in cutting the railway between Canton and Kowloon. The Chinese relieving troops actually reached Tamsui, 40 miles, and Shunchun, 27 miles, from the Kowloon border on 23 December, two days before the capitulation on Christmas Day.

Brigadier-General J. K. Lawson, commanding the Canadian contingent, and his senior staff officer, Colonel Patrick Hennessy, were killed in the fighting. There were other casualties amongst the Brigadier's staff, the members of which, headed by General Lawson himself, armed themselves with rifles and machine-guns and helped to fill gaps in the line.

British, Indian and Canadian troops fully maintained their high reputation for courage and discipline under all these trying circumstances. The civilians on the island behaved very well under the grim conditions suddenly imposed upon them. During the last week of desperate resistance, the crowded island was without light, water or electricity. The city was under continuous bombardment from the air, and later by long range artillery pieces brought up by the enemy. Deaths amongst the civilians averaged 150 a day. Till the end the civil defence services of food control, fire fighting and first aid were kept going. There was little, if any, Fifth Column work to aid the invaders on the island, though spies and agents provocateurs were identified in Kowloon where there was some disorder. Every able-bodied man in the island, young or old, British, American, Chinese, Indian, and a handful of French and Dutch citizens, either fought as volunteers with such armaments as were available, or served in the civil defence. Mention must particularly be made of the heroic resistance of a platoon of British business men all over military age who, armed with rifles, converted the North Point power-station into a strong point and held out to the last. They were under the command of Mr. J. J. Paterson, the local representative of the great shipping firm of Jardine Matheson, which had been prominent in the trade of the Chinese coast and rivers for nearly a century.

Despite the close land and sea blockade, a certain number of British and allied subjects made good their escape. Just before the capitulation 83 British and Chinese ran the blockade in five motor torpedo boats. They were led by the Chinese Vice-Admiral Chancaik who had been appointed as liaison officer between the Chinese and British authorities after the Japanese declaration of war. The

Admiral had lost a leg in the service of his country, and, during a running fight with Japanese motor torpedo-boats was wounded in the arm and fell into the sea. He was rescued after swimming for an hour and with 66 other survivors landed on the coast of Kwantung, where contact was made with the Chinese forces. In the fight with the Japanese warships, one of the British motor torpedo-boats was sunk and all the 16 persons on her perished. Two Japanese motor torpedo-boats were sunk.

After the surrender, Lord Moyne, His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, sent the following message to the Governor of the Straits Settlements for transmission by any available means to the Governor of Hongkong:

"It is a good fight you have fought. I send you and all who have held out so splendidly against overwhelming force the thanks of His Majesty's Government. The defence of Hongkong will live in the story of the Empire, to which it adds yet another chapter of courage and endurance. But it is only for a time that the colony is lost. The day of reckoning will follow, and all shall come right in the end."

It is a pity that Lord Moyne and his predecessors at the Colonial Office did not pay more attention to the defence of Hongkong under the entirely new circumstances existing from 1935 onwards. Perhaps if our Colonial Ministers had made a practice of visiting important Crown Colonies and Protectorates and had relied less on the advice of permanent officials—who were sometimes incompetent and usually bureaucratically-minded—these and other disasters would have been avoided.

The British people, not without reason, boast of the wealth and power of the Empire. Before the separation of the Dominion and Colonial Office after the war of 1914-18, the Colonial Office was responsible for the whole of the vast Dominions owing allegiance to the British Crown. In area and populations it is certainly the greatest Empire the world has ever seen. Yet, in our long Colonial history, only two outstanding Colonial Ministers have emerged—the late Joseph Chamberlain and the late Duke of Devonshire.

On 25 December, 1941, headed by bands and trumpeters, Japanese troops and marines made a ceremonial march into the city of Victoria, Hongkong. As the troops marched along Queen's Road, which runs the entire length of the great city, formations of Japanese aircraft flew overhead. So, through the neglect and short-sightedness of British politicians, fell this great Imperial-outpost.

## CHAPTER V

### THE BATTLE OF MALAYA

ONE of the first Japanese aeroplanes destroyed in the Battle of Malaya was shot down by a Maori pilot from New Zealand. Not a single pilot fighting in the air against the Japanese during the fifty-five days' battle was a native of Malaya.

These two facts epitomise the reasons why Japanese forces conquered one of the wealthiest countries in the world, the size of England and Scotland and Wales combined, in fifty-five days. Asiatics in numbers attacked a thickly populated Asiatic country but were not met by the masses of Asiatics who should have been defending their homeland. The Japanese commanders won by weight of numbers both on the ground and in the air. Contributory causes were the failure of the defenders to adjust their strategy to novel conditions; the careful preparation made in advance by the invaders; and the special training given to the Japanese troops in jungle warfare.

Malaya has a double importance: it produces immense quantities of rubber and tin. There are also important iron ore, gold and coal mines. It is the hinterland of Singapore, one of the most important strategical positions in the world, and certainly the most important in the whole of Asia. A naval Power securely established at Singapore commands the Straits of Malacca. Through these straits pass the shipping sailing between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and through these straits passes the direct trade route between the Dutch East Indies, Australasia and Europe via the Suez Canal. In a war between the British Empire and Japan, or between the English speaking democracies and Japan, the importance of Singapore as a naval and air base cannot be exaggerated. Yet no naval and air Power can be secure at Singapore unless Malaya is firmly held, and, only to a lesser degree of importance, the great island of Sumatra on the other side of the Straits of Malacca is in friendly hands.

It is necessary here to glance briefly at the history of this vitally important part of Asia. The first European settlement in Malaya was at the Port of Malacca. It was occupied by the Portuguese from 1511 to 1641, when it passed to the Dutch. In 1795 Malacca was taken by the English, who restored it to the Government of the Netherlands in 1818. It was finally ceded to the East India Company in 1824. The first British Settlement was at Penang, further to the north, ceded to the East India Company by the Sultan of Kedah in 1786. Singapore, meaning 'City of the Lion', was founded as a trading settlement in 1819 by a great Empire builder, Sir Stamford Raffles. In 1824 Raffles persuaded the British Government to buy it for £13,500. Raffles, a man with extraordinary vision, argued



that the Straits of Malacca formed a gateway to the Pacific and that Singapore dominated the Straits. Before the present war the port of Singapore, on the south side of the island, was fifth in importance in the British Empire. Prior to 1922 there was also a secondary British naval base at Singapore with a small dockyard and some repair plants and a dry dock capable of accommodating cruisers. The place was lightly fortified with batteries of medium-sized guns facing the sea and was normally garrisoned by one British battalion.

After the Great War of 1914-18 the balance of naval power had changed. The German navy, which had been second in strength to the British navy amongst the navies of the world, had ceased to exist for practical purposes. The Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Alliance had expired, as explained in a previous chapter. The three greatest navies in the world—the British, American, and Japanese—though limited in numbers as regards the great ships by the Washington Naval Treaty of 1921-22, all had bases in the Pacific. British statesmanship had suffered a series of shocks by the Japanese attitude towards China during the preceding years. The Australians and New Zealanders, in particular, were uneasy about Japanese intentions. The British Naval Staff, studying plans for the future, decided that it would be necessary to strengthen the defences and enlarge the naval establishment at Singapore. I had taken some part in the discussions myself when on the Admiralty War Staff, and I took some public part in the discussions which followed in Parliament. There were two schools of thought amongst those responsible for the defence arrangements of the British Empire. The first wished to make on Singapore island a first-class naval base, dockyard, and arsenal with the now indispensable addition of air establishments and aerodromes. This school visualized the stationing of a British battle squadron, sufficiently strong to engage the Japanese battle fleet, in the Pacific, and basing it on Singapore. The second school, to which I adhered, argued for keeping Singapore as a cruiser and submarine base and enlarging the establishment to that extent, and also making it a first-class air base. Admitting that a great naval establishment, with docks capable of accommodating the very large battleships the naval architects had in mind, the large staff of skilled workmen required for the repairing yards and a strong garrison to hold a place of such importance was needed in the Pacific, we argued that the main base of the British Eastern Fleet should be in Australia. There were fears that the Japanese, who were the obvious enemy against whom we were preparing, would be able to land in Malaya and, as we put it in those days, turn Singapore into a second Port Arthur. To explain the reference, Port Arthur was the main base of the large Russian Pacific Fleet in 1904. The Japanese were able to effect landings in its rear and, after hard fighting to gain sufficient ground to be able to mount heavy guns commanding the harbour at Port Arthur and observation posts to direct their fire. That spelt the doom of Port Arthur and the

Fleet in it. The great Russian port and arsenal had fallen before the Russian Baltic Fleet under Admiral Rojdestvensky could reach the Pacific. Rojdestvensky, acting quite correctly as a strategist, tried to push on to Vladivostok, but was engaged by the Japanese Fleet in the Straits of Shushima and decisively defeated.

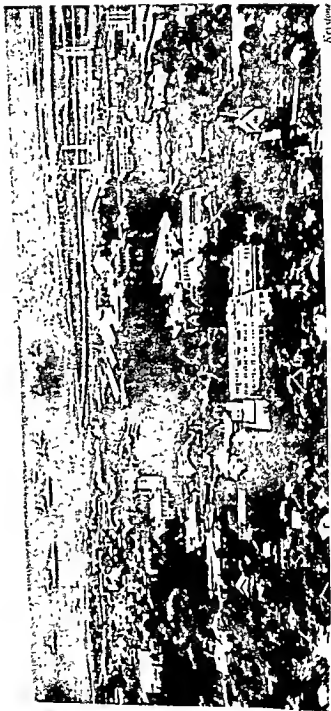
The reply to these fears was that the French were in Indo-China, where they maintained a large army of European and Colonial troops; and, as France was our close ally, she would guard Singapore's back door. There were other objections to Singapore. One was climatic. Lying near the Equator the climate is trying for Europeans and, though not particularly unhealthy, is hot, damp, and enervating. New South Wales, the alternative suggested for the great graving-dock, has a much better climate. At Singapore there was no great engineering industry and most of the skilled workers for the dockyard would have to come out from Britain. It would take time to train native skilled labour. In Australia is a large and growing engineering industry, including important iron-smelting and steel-making plants supplied with an abundance of iron ore, coal, and other raw materials. Perhaps the most powerful argument for making Sydney, or some other suitable place in Australia, the main Pacific base for the Royal Navy was that there the Australian Army would be the natural guardians of this naval base. In Singapore, on the other hand, a very large army would be required to make the place secure.

In the event, it was decided to make Singapore the focal point for the British Fleet. As a reinsurance, discussions were opened up with the Federal Government of Australia for the construction of a graving-dock capable of accommodating the largest battleships. When I was in Australia in 1939 I inquired about the progress of this plan and found there had been a long drawn-out dispute as to where this dock should be. The largest naval establishment in Australia is at Sydney, the capital of New South Wales, and there were many who recommended that the docks should be built there. It would have had to have been inland of the great Sydney Bridge spanning the harbour, and there were fears that this bridge might be blown down by air attack or other means, thus blocking the entrance to the sea. Two or three other deep-water harbours, far less developed than Sydney, were available, any one of which could have been converted into a great naval base. When I left the Dominion the stage had been reached of an expert committee being on its way to advise the Australian Government as to what decision to take. It was of course obvious that, in certain circumstances, the existence of a dock or docks capable of accommodating the largest warships would be of interest to the American Naval Staff.

When the decision was finally taken to construct the base at Singapore it was found that there was insufficient room at Keppel Harbour, the existing small naval establishment, and it was decided to break new ground on the shores of the Strait of Johore on the north

side of the island. Johore Strait divides the island from the Malay peninsula and forms a deep sheltered anchorage able to accommodate all the fleets of the world. The site chosen for the base and the aerodrome was either swamp or agricultural land and the whole area had to be cleared, drained and, in part, reclaimed. Roads were built, barracks, storehouses, and workshops erected, and immense sums spent on providing everything which a large fleet would require. A floating-dock, able to lift the largest warship, was towed out and moored in Johore Strait. On land the latest type graving-dock was excavated, also capable of accommodating the largest warship. Between 1924 and 1937 £12,617,000 was spent on the naval base, and considerable sums after 1937. With the expenditure on aerodromes and air establishments and the modern barracks required for the extra garrison, at least £30,000,000 was laid out. The civil aerodrome near Singapore city, one of the best landing-places in the world, was constructed on ground which was jungle and swamp and where my friends and I shot snipe as young naval officers. This cost £1,000,000. Powerful modern batteries of the heaviest guns were mounted to command all the sea approaches to the island and Johore Strait. When all this work was done it was claimed that Singapore was impregnable to sea attack, and this claim was, no doubt, justified. Nor was the air command backward. In addition to the great civil aerodrome and two first-class military aerodromes on the island itself, thirteen good aerodromes or landing grounds were constructed in the Malay peninsula, the most northerly being at Kota Bahru just south of the Siamese border. These linked up by means of a string of aerodromes in Southern Burma, with the Indian air system and thence with Egypt and Europe.

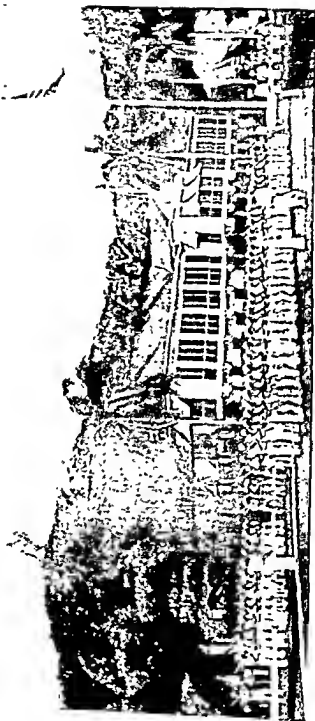
The weakness of the whole position was the defence of the Malay peninsula. The stock argument always used against those who suggested there might be a land attack on Singapore from the north was the one already referred to about our French Allies in Indo-China, and also the utterly false statement that the jungle country on the mainland to the north of the island was impenetrable. How intelligent men could have accepted this argument is a mystery. The causeway across the Johore Strait, joining the island to the mainland, carried a railway and a road. The railway was extended right through the peninsula to Bangkok, the capital of Thailand. There were roads everywhere, some of them first-class, some of them not so good, but all capable of carrying motor traffic. It was a pleasant drive from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur, the capital of the Federated States, and thence to the coast opposite the island of Penang on the west where a motor-car ferry was in operation. Great areas of the peninsula were devoted to rubber growing and tin mining, some of these enterprises being in Japanese hands. In any case, apart from the roads and railway the Japanese invaders showed conclusively that they could infiltrate through the thickest jungles and across the wettest paddy



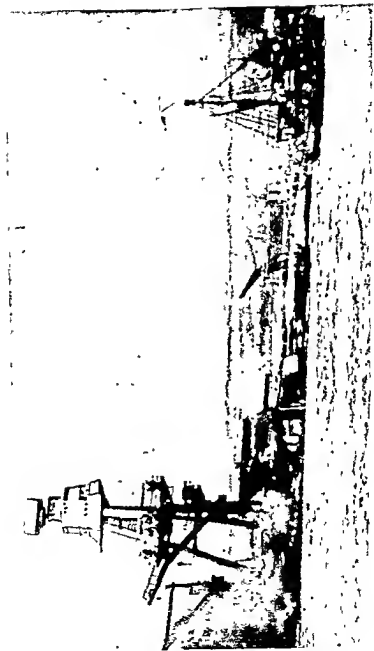
PEARL HARBOR

APR 1941





GUAM: MILITARIEN AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE



THE WRECKED U.S.S. "ARIZONA"

Wide World

fields. To hold Malaya securely, and therefore render the naval base safe, a very large army was required. On 8 December 1941 the Japanese landed at Singgora and Petani in Thai territory near the borders, and on 10 December they attacked Kota Bahru. They already had large concentrations of troops in Indo-China. After only a token resistance they occupied Thailand. This gave them direct railway communication from Bangkok to the Malay frontier.

In the debate in Parliament on 27-29 January 1942 the Prime Minister disclosed the information that 60,000 British, Indian, Australian, and other Imperial troops were available for the defence of the Malay peninsula and Singapore.<sup>1</sup> However this may have been, the brunt of the fighting up to the middle of January was borne by three British battalions, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, the East Surreys, and the Leicesters, and about a division of Indian troops, or, say, 13,000 in all. The invaders deployed armies totalling at least 100,000. Certainly six Japanese divisions were identified, and as a Japanese division numbers 16,000, this was 96,000 fighting men. The frontier between Thailand and Malaya is over 200 miles in length and the shortest line which could be established for defence purposes would have been over 100 miles long. Quite apart from other difficulties to be described, and apart from the fact that from the very beginning of the battle of Malaya the Japanese had air superiority in numbers, it is obvious that far larger forces would be required.

One consideration which no doubt affected the decisions of those responsible for the defence of Malaya was the belief that during the north-east monsoon, which usually lasts till the middle or end of March, landings on the east coast of Malaya, except for one or two ports which could be defended, would be difficult. The existence of Singgora seems to have been overlooked. Here, on Thailand territory, is a vast enclosed stretch of water 100 miles long with a narrow entrance to the open sea only half a mile wide. It is an ideal landing-place and has a good aerodrome. If we had had the necessary military forces and sufficient air strength the correct move would have been to advance into Thailand and get to Singgora first, or, at any rate, before the complicated business of landing a large invading army with all its equipment, artillery, and tanks could be completed. The excuse put forward for the weakness of our forces in Malaya was that the men, weapons, and aeroplanes were more urgently needed in other theatres of war. Before 7 December, when Japan attacked Pearl Harbour and Hongkong, we were at peace with that country. We were fighting the Germans and Italians in Europe and the Middle East. All our surplus tanks, artillery, military stores, and aeroplanes were either going to our allies on the Russian front fighting the German armies there, or to the armies of the Middle East campaigning against the German forces in Libya. To have diverted men and weapons to

<sup>1</sup> After the attack had developed nine convoys with 40,000 troops, anti-aircraft and anti-tank artillery reached Singapore to reinforce the army already in Malaya.



Malaya, where there was only a problematical theatre of war, would, it is argued, have been bad strategy. There are two answers to this: the first is that the Malay peninsula, as the hinterland of Singapore, was so important that common prudence should have provided forces. Admittedly there were shipping difficulties. All available tonnage was required for the triple purpose of supplying the British islands with food, raw materials, and weapons from overseas; for reinforcing the armies in the Middle East; and for sending equipment and also planes to Russia. Furthermore, we could not foretell how the titanic battles between the German and Russian armies would develop, and we had created defensive fronts in Palestine, Syria, Irak, and Iran, in case the German hordes overran the Caucasus.

It is possible to suggest that we were over-insured in the British Islands. Yet against this was the fear that the German armies might succeed in crushing the Russian resistance and then move westward in an attempt to invade Britain. And it is certainly a slow business to send troops and weapons from the British islands to Malaya. Yet the Japanese movements in Indo-China were crystal clear. That an attack was coming should have been obvious. There was time between June 1941, when the pro-Vichy Government in Indo-China capitulated and the Japanese began to pour in troops and air squadrons, and the following December, to have taken more precautions. It seemed apparent also that the Thai Government would resist the Japanese aggression. Solemn promises of assistance were given. Here there was apparently a bad failure on the part of the British Intelligence Service. Information does not seem to have been obtained of the growth of Japanese influence in Thailand, and the perfidy of the Thai Government. It is possible, however, that, not for the first time, warnings were given to the British Government and War Cabinet which went unheeded in the stress and turmoil of other events.

Some ten years ago, and at intervals since, there were circumstantial stories of Japanese designs on Thai, though in view of the apparently strong position of the British in Malaya and the French in Indo-China they were not taken seriously. One Japanese project which was canvassed from time to time was to purchase land in the Kra Isthmus, north of Malaya, for the purpose of cutting a deep water canal capable of use by large ships. This avowedly commercial project would have meant that in time of war Singapore could be by-passed, and it was made plain that Britain would resist it. There had been growing up for some time a 'Young Siamese' movement, strongly nationalistic in character. It was now virtually in control of the Siamese Government. Part of its propaganda was directed against the Treaty of 1909 which transferred the four northern unfederated Malay States from Thailand to Britain. The Japanese supported this propaganda and one of the bribes no doubt held out to the régime in Bangkok was the restoration of these States. Nevertheless

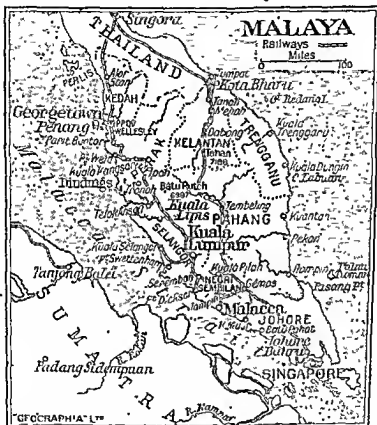
less there was much resentment amongst patriotic Thailanders at the virtual annexation of their country. For, despite their common Buddhist religion, the Thailanders have no more love for the Japanese than any of the other Asiatic people who have come into contact with them. On 13 December 1941 the Prime Minister of Thailand, Field-Marshal Songgram, broadcast an address to his compatriots. The gist of the speech was as follows:

"I want to assure you, in this instance, I am not a traitor. I would like you to know that Japan is our greatest friend in life or death, and we have to walk together shoulder to shoulder to fight our common enemy. All of you should know that Britain took a large piece of our territory in the south, for which Japan is now fighting. I hope our army will be proud to be in the same front with the Japanese army. Presently we will ally ourselves with Japan."

On 25 January 1942 it was announced that Thailand had declared war on the United States of America and the British Empire, and the declaration was formally conveyed to the British Government through Swiss diplomatic channels on 3 February 1942.

The other answer to the excuses made for our military weakness in Malaya is that we should have raised troops locally. There was plenty of man-power available. It is necessary here to describe the political and racial make-up of Malaya. The Straits Settlements are British Colonies, consisting of Singapore and Penang Islands, Wellesley Province, opposite Penang, and the Malacca Province. The total population in 1940 was 1,406,120. This was made up of 309,000 Malays, 17,000 Europeans, 904,000 Chinese, 149,000 Indians, and some other elements (Eurasians, and various Asiatic communities). The great majority of these Malays, Chinese, and Indians were British subjects: The Malay States are divided into the federated and unfederated. There is not much difference in practice; the Sultans of all these States had British advisers, whose advice they were required to take and they were in firm British control. They were populated by 10,722 Europeans, 703,000 Malaysians, 967,000 Chinese, and 464,000 Indians. The unfederated states, the most important of which is Johore, are five in number. Johore had a population of 779,000 made up of 327,000 Malaysians, 366,000 Chinese, 80,000 Indians and a few hundred Europeans. The other four unfederated states are Kedah, with a population of 485,000; Perlis, with a population of 56,382; Kelantan, with a population of 394,000; and Trengganu, with a population of 204,000. Most of the population of the unfederated states are Malays with a sprinkling of Chinese, Indians, and Europeans. The Malays were mostly engaged in agriculture. They are an easy-going people and do not take kindly to work off their own land; but that they are suitable fighting material is shown partly by their past history and partly by the fact that one battalion of Malay

soldiers had been trained by British officers. The Sultans maintained small state forces also under British officers. In Kelantan the Sultan's bodyguard of 100 Malays behaved creditably. Obviously a much larger army could have been recruited and trained from the Malay male population. The Malays are good mechanics, when trained, and handle motor-car and motor-boat engines efficiently. The internal combustion engine brought great changes in Malaya as



elsewhere. This was vividly brought home to me by personal experience. Through the courtesy of the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Secretary of State for War, and the Air Minister, I was given facilities to see over the naval and air base and the military establishments and fortifications. I spent a night in the country bungalow of a leading planter in the State of Johore, and early the next morning I went down to his creek where his boatman, a typical old Malay, was waiting to take me out into the Johore Strait, where I was to be picked up by a naval pinnace sent from the dockyard. I had never seen the country looking so beautiful. The rich tropical jungle was ablaze with flowers, kingfishers flashed like jewels along the river bank, the water and the sky were blue and the scene alto-

gether lovely. At a bamboo pier the old Malay waited with his boat. I had looked forward to a leisurely voyage with the old man paddling, but, to my astonishment, I found that his canoe was fitted with an outboard motor. We streaked down the creek at a good speed and were out into the Johore Strait in a few minutes.

The Indians were mostly Tamils brought from India to work on the plantations. These Tamils are not of fighting stock; but amongst the other Indians were considerable numbers with military traditions. The Chinese in the Peninsula numbered approximately 2,000,000. Some work in the tin mines, others were traders, artisans, market-gardeners, shopkeepers and the like. The Chinese in Malaya had the same hostile feelings towards the Japanese as the rest of the Chinese people. Some were veterans of the wars against the Japanese aggressors, including soldiers who had fought in the famous Ninth Route Army.

When I was in the country before the outbreak of the European war, the Chinese inhabitants were imposing a rigorous boycott on all Japanese trading activities. As most of the retail, and a good deal of the wholesale, trade was in Chinese hands, this boycott was particularly effective. The few Japanese shops were forlorn and deserted. One of the changes I noticed on revisiting Singapore city after many years of absence was that it had been transformed into an almost Chinese city. These British subjects of Chinese race are good citizens, industrious and law-abiding, and since the great political events in China, including the establishment of the Republic, much interested in politics. They had fallen foul of the British Colonial Government. There was a Chinese Communist party, corresponding to the Communist Party in the Republic, which had been proscribed and declared illegal and its leaders deported or jailed. When the first air raid took place on Singapore these Chinese leaders were released or recalled and implored to help in organizing the defence services.

Worse still, the Kuomintang Party amongst the Singapore Chinese was also in trouble; and its leader, a wealthy and respected Chinese resident, had been expelled from the country. The Kuomintang is the Party of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and Mr. Wellington Koo, the gifted Chinese Ambassador to the Court of St. James. From the first day of the Japanese invasion the Chinese offered their services and did splendid work in the air raids on the cities of Malaya, including Singapore, working as wardens and in the first-aid and fire-fighting services. The women played their part as nurses and roof-sitters and in every other way open to them; and very belatedly, a Chinese defence force, 1,000 strong, was recruited and armed. It was just ready in time to help in the defence of Singapore Island. From the Chinese in Malaya an army could have been recruited sufficient in numbers to have made a successful Japanese invasion impossible, without taking into account the unused Malayan and Indian man power.

It is curious that the senior members of the British Civil Service,

all of whom have had a classical education, do not pay more attention to history. They might learn some lessons from the Roman Empire. The Romans raised the bulk of their legions from the non-Italian populations. They were recruited locally and the officers could, and did, rise to the highest positions in the Empire, including that of Emperor. But every inhabitant of a country absorbed into the Roman Empire became automatically a citizen with full rights and privileges. Paul, the Jew, was proud to claim his Roman citizenship. In theory, this has been the principle of the British Empire. There should be no colour bar. In practice, though justice has been even-handed, our Malayan, Indian and Chinese fellow-citizens were not made to feel that they were on an equality with the Europeans. Service under arms, or the right to bear arms, is a hall-mark of citizenship in the present day world. Unfortunately, Whitehall still suffered in 1941 from memories of the Indian Mutiny.

There are, however, refreshing exceptions in other parts of the Empire. In West Africa, for example, negro soldiers are freely recruited and give, and have given, valuable service. Those who may plead that conditions have changed since Roman times and that the Roman practice is inapplicable now, might forget their prejudices for the moment and examine the practice of the Soviet Government of Russia. Present day Russia in Europe and Asia is a conglomeration of peoples and tribes who, in Czarist days, were at varying levels of culture and education. There are over a hundred distinct nationalities and races in the great territories administered from Moscow. All are treated on an absolute equality and all provide soldiers for the Red Army in proportion to their numbers.

The usual excuse has been made that there were no arms available. Large quantities of munitions could have been made in Singapore. There has been a ship-repairing and engineering industry in the Colony for fifty years and the creation of the naval base greatly increased the numbers of skilled workers available. I have in front of me a letter from a Government official in Malaya, an engineering technician who held an important position, written on 8 November 1940, half a year after the tragedy of Dunkirk. One passage in it reads:

"When I came out here I made an unofficial survey of plant and labour which would be available for the manufacture of munitions. I drew up a complete scheme of organization for the manufacture of 9,000,000 rounds of .303 per month together with shells, aerial bombs, Mills and rifle bombs, mines and sinkers for the Navy, etc. This was fully detailed, but the powers that be were not interested."

Then he goes into details, and later he summarises the position in this way:

"Malaya is as far from making anything now as it was twelve months ago, and this notwithstanding I have Vickers-trained

men all eager and ready to join with me in putting over the job, and all the Services are waiting for our production. It is more than galling to know you have the organization all ready for the word 'Go', and yet no one will assume authority."

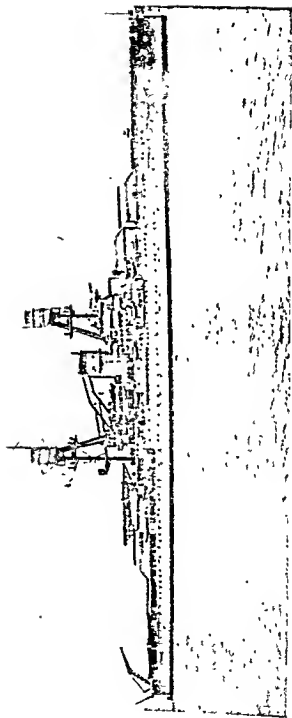
Eventually something was done on these lines, but only after long and criminal delays. If, however, Malaya could not alone supply all the munitions required for the army necessary for its defence, munitions could have been made in India. Here there is abundant iron, steel and coal and a growing engineering industry. The excuse for the non-development of this Indian munition-making industry is that the necessary machine tools were more urgently needed in Britain; but there is more behind this lack of the utilization of India's potential industrial resources than a shortage of machine tools. Right up to the time of the invasion of Burma and the direct threat to India not a single internal motor combustion engine, either for aeroplanes or motor cars, had been manufactured in India. During many years attempts had been made to start a motor-car manufacturing industry in India. It was always blocked by the Indian Government at the behest of the vested interests amongst the motor-car manufacturers working hand in glove in Britain and the United States of America. The furthest India got in providing herself with her own motor vehicles, and therefore her own aeroplanes, was the establishment of an assembly plant for motor-cars very late in the day. It was more profitable for the British motor manufacturers and their American collaborators to import manufactured motor lorries, motor-cars and motor-cycles into India than to help in the establishment of factories in the country. Furthermore, the munition-making industry in India, except for certain items, was hindered by a short-sighted policy which dared not make weapons available for the Indian peoples.

To have raised Asiatic armies in Malaya something like a revolution in the outlook and policy of the British Colonial Office was required. In December 1941 the officials of the British Colonial Office still clung to the ideas of the nineteenth century where native populations were concerned. They were treated as immature wards to be defended by a small garrison of European or other alien troops. If the Chinese, for example, were trained to arms, or were armed, the theory of these antediluvians was that they might be in a position to demand political concessions. There was also the ridiculous idea that the white man's prestige demanded that only he should be the armed defender. Yet, if the white man could not defend his Asiatic fellow subjects against another Asiatic power, what became of his prestige?

Far-sighted statesmanship would have reversed these policies as soon as it was decided to hazard British sea power in the Pacific on the safety of Malaya. The people should have been trained, like other British subjects, to defend their own property and lives. This

long range policy was lacking, and it was difficult to make up for the wasted years when the crisis came. Yet that much more could have been done after the shock of Munich in 1938 is undoubted. Those responsible for the loss of the Battle of Malaya were, firstly, the officials of the Colonial Office in London and their successive political chiefs (which means the British Cabinet); secondly, the Committee of Imperial Defence (which was supposed to advise on these matters and which, strange as it may sound, was wound up at the beginning of the European war); and, thirdly, the Colonial Government in Malaya itself. It was the duty of the man on the spot, in other words, the Governor-General, to recognize the weakness of the position, to represent it to the authorities at home, and, if the representations were ignored, to resign. That is perhaps rather a hard thing to ask of men approaching their age for pension; but then we should appoint younger, fresher and more vigorous minds to key positions of this importance.

Many hard things have been said and written about the Europeans—in other words the British residents and business men—in Malaya. I have seen these people at close quarters for many years and have known them intimately. The great rubber industry in Malaya was founded and developed by Scotsmen. The Colonies and States, federated and unfederated, were enriched, developed and made prosperous by British enterprise, aided by Indian labour and the Chinese. The climate is always very hot and frequently unpleasant. Children beyond the age of two or three do not thrive and must be sent home. This means the breaking up of families: the mothers have the hard choice of going home with the children or being separated from them. The planters and tin miners up country lead arduous and lonely lives, with only occasional visits to the nearest city or settlement as a break in the monotony. In other words, these British settlers were exiles. As the industries, plantations and mines prospered so they prospered. Fortunes were made, but surely that is no more wrong in Malaya than in any other part of the world. Their patriotism was beyond question. The younger men joined the fighting services in both the world wars, and those older ones left behind joined the local defence forces. The British in Malaya were accused of drinking too much. They were no better and no worse in this respect than their compatriots at home; except that it is easier to keep healthy and take strong drink in Britain than in the tropics. The defects in policy and defence matters were not the responsibility of the white tuans and it is grossly unfair to make scapegoats of them. Another accusation is that taxation was too light. The reason why there was no income tax in Malaya was the difficulty in levying it on Indian and Chinese firms in whose hands was so much of the business, and whose head offices were in India or China. In any case the armaments and defences of Singapore were an Imperial responsibility and not paid for out of the Colonial revenues.



Typical

U.S.S. "OKLAHOMA". SUNK IN PEARL HARBOR



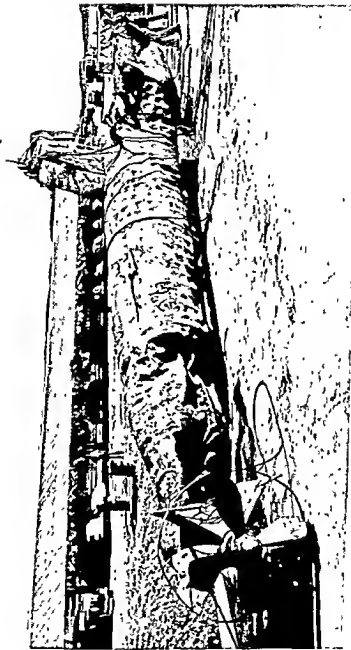


GUANI



JAPANESE TWO-MAN SUBMARINE

*Keystone*



TWO-MAN JAPANESE SUBMARINE CAPTURED AT PEARL HARBOR

*Koryu*

It may not be generally realized how much depends, in Colonial administration and defence, on the personality of the Governor or Governor-General. He is the King's representative, and this alone gives him great prestige. A good Governor can do wonders. The Governor-Generalship of Malaya is one of the plums of the Colonial service; consequently, in accordance with our unfortunate practice, it usually falls to a man of considerable seniority and therefore well-advanced in years. Whenever the permanent officials of the Colonial Office can contrive it, they appoint a gentleman whom they consider 'safe'; that is to say not likely to introduce innovations. In Malaya the Governor-General had to balance or reconcile a number of interests, sometimes conflicting. I have described the mixed population, with most of the Chinese and Indians politically minded, and the Malays far less advanced in education and general outlook. The powerful European commercial interests were not only strong locally but represented great financial and business interests in London; the very kind of interests which are able to bring pressure to bear on Governments and Parliaments. In addition there were the naval, military and air establishments and the civil administration in the Colonies, the federated and the unfederated states. Both tact and firmness are required to govern efficiently in these circumstances at a time when the natural wealth in the peninsula was being rapidly developed and great naval, military and air establishments were in process of construction and expansion.

The most startling fact I found in the spring of 1939 was a complete lack of liaison between the Staff and Government in Singapore, the Dutch authorities in the East Indies, and the French authorities in Indo-China. The Dutch were frightened of open collaboration for fear of offending their mighty and cruel German neighbour; but discreet conversations could have been held. It was obvious to any intelligent person looking at the map that the Straits of Malacca could not be held, nor the Singapore base defended, if an enemy succeeded in establishing himself on the Dutch island of Sumatra, facing the peninsula. On my return I took what steps were open to me to suggest remedies for this situation and found a willing collaborator in the Netherlands Minister in London, Jonkheer Michiels Van Verduynen. This distinguished diplomat had the advantage of previous service as Governor-General and Viceroy of the Dutch East Indian Empire. I can find no excuse whatsoever, on the other hand, for the failure to enter into close collaboration with the French in Indo-China. I believe, possibly as a result of a very strong protest I made behind the scenes in Whitehall and Downing Street, that this neglect was afterwards remedied. Certainly, after the invasion of Holland important staff talks took place with the Dutch East Indian authorities and these bore fruit as soon as Japan attacked Britain and America in the Pacific.

Another accusation is that the scorched earth policy was not

applied before retreating in face of the invaders because of vested interests. The responsibility for destroying the property and equipment useful to the enemy was a military one. There were failures here no doubt, especially in Penang, where there was general panic and breakdown in the civil administration; but the main fault was with the officials and military authorities and not with the civil population: 350,000,000 rubber trees are not easily destroyed. The tin, coal and iron mines were put out of action.

Hard things have been said about the Commander-in-Chief, Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham. This distinguished air officer had retired from the Service before the war, and had been appointed Governor-General of Kenya. He retired in 1937, but at once applied to rejoin the Air Service at the outbreak of war, and was reappointed to the active list. He had been Commander-in-Chief in the Far East for just over a year when, in November 1941, before the Japanese invasion, Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Pownall was appointed to succeed him. Sir Robert Brooke-Popham was then sixty-three. He had repeatedly pressed for reinforcements and especially for more air squadrons, but had not managed to persuade the War Cabinet to send them. One of the grounds for the criticism of the Commander-in-Chief is that he had made over-optimistic statements in public about the defence of Malaya. He probably had talked too much; but as Commander-in-Chief he would have been open to censure for openly avowing the weakness of his command. Unfortunately, Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, whatever his motive, though he had fully informed the Defence Council of the situation, misled public opinion in Malaya, Australia and Britain; but he did not mislead the Japanese. They knew only too well the strength and weakness of our forces, the paucity of troops, the fact that our only fighter aeroplanes were obsolescent Buffaloes, that the magnificent aerodromes constructed at such great cost and dotted over the peninsula were empty of aeroplanes. There were plenty of Japanese in Malaya, apart from those working in the tin mines and rubber plantations. Japanese shopkeepers, barbers, dentists, photographers, petty traders and pedlars were scattered throughout the peninsula. When the Chinese boycott put them out of business they had no need to worry. They were subsidised through the Japanese Consul-General and Consuls. Japanese fishing vessels, manned by Japanese naval officers, had explored every river and creek. The Japanese residents were keen botanists, hunters, photographers, and explorers. The Japanese intelligence service worked well, and wherever a fifth column could be found it was utilized.

On 8 December, 1941, the following Order of the Day was issued jointly by the Commander-in-Chief, Far East, Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, and the Commander-in-Chief, China Station, Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton:

"Japan's action to-day gives the signal for the Empire Naval, Army, and Air Forces and for the Forces of the Allies to go into

action with a common aim and common ideals. We are ready: we have had plenty of warning, and our preparations have been made and tested.

"We do not forget at this moment the years of patience and forbearance. We have borne with dignity and discipline the petty insults and insolences inflicted on us by the Japanese in the Far East. We know that those things were only done because Japan thought she could take advantage of our supposed weakness. Now, when Japan herself has decided to put the matter to a sterner test, she will find that she has made a grievous mistake.

"We are confident. Our defences are strong and our weapons efficient. Whatever our race, and whether we are now in our native lands or have come from thousands of miles away, we have one aim, and one only: it is to defend these shores, to destroy such of our enemies as may set foot on our soil, and then finally to end the power of the enemy to endanger our ideals, our possessions, and our peace.

"What of the enemy? We see before us Japan, drained for years by the exhausting claims of her wanton onslaught on China. We see Japan, whose trade and industry have been so dislocated by these years of reckless adventure that in a mood of desperation her Government have plunged her into war under the delusion that by stabbing a friendly nation in the back she can gain her needs. Let her look at Italy, and what has happened since that nation tried a similar base action.

"Let us all remember that we here in the Far East form part of the great campaign for the preservation in the world of truth and justice and freedom. Confidence, resolution, enterprise, and devotion to the cause must and will inspire every one of us in the fighting services, while from the civilian population, Malay, Chinese, or Indian, we expect that patience, endurance, and serenity which is the great virtue of the East, and which will go far to assist the fighting men to gain a final and complete victory."

The only comment I would venture to make on these admirable sentiments is that it would have been easier for the Malays, Chinese, and Indians to show patience and serenity if they had had arms in their hands.

A few days later a somewhat different order was issued by the Governor-General of the Straits Settlements, Sir Shenton Thomas, in the form of a circular, which said:

"The day of minute papers is gone. . . . There must be no more passing of files from one department to another. . . . Similarly, the days of letters and reports are over.

"All written matter should be in the form of short notes. . . . Every officer must accept responsibility to the full in taking decisions. . . . The essential thing is speed in action. Nothing

matters which is not directly concerned with defence, and no one should be troubled with it."

The circular concludes:

"Officers who show that they cannot take responsibility should be replaced by those who can."

The Governor-General had assumed this high office in 1934.

The *Straits Times* made this comment:

"What about the immediate replacing of the worst obstructionists? Why wait until they have done more harm? We have a sneaking fear that unless the circular is followed by vigorous action nothing much will happen."

The British and Indian troops holding the northern frontier were under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir William Platt, one of the finest soldiers and leaders of men the war had produced in the British Army. General Platt was in command during the brilliant operations when the great Italian mountain stronghold of Karen in Eritrea was stormed. The problem facing the Commander-in-Chief was that the Japanese had air superiority, at any rate for the time being. Despite hard and successful combats by the Royal Air Force and the Royal Australian Air Force, he was short of fighters, especially of the modern type.

Immediate air reinforcements could not be looked for from India, according to plan. A chain of aerodromes and landing-grounds had been established down the long narrow strip of Burma on the Indian Ocean, and the intention was to fly reinforcements in case of need by this route. A column of Japanese troops, however, striking across the Thailand border, had captured the most important of these aerodromes; Mergui, in the province of Tenasserim, and Port Victoria aerodrome also fell. Japanese fighters based on these landing-grounds could intercept any reinforcements coming by air. The Commander-in-Chief had to take into account also the possibility of Japanese landings farther south on the east coast of the peninsula, and troops had to be held in readiness to resist these. The undisputed command of the South China Sea by the Japanese Navy after the sinking of the large British warships, *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse*, had made this more than a possibility. Finally, sufficient troops had to be maintained as a reserve for the defence of Singapore Island. Reinforcements were on the way, but there was no certainty when the convoys would arrive. The plan adopted, therefore, was to fight a delaying action, holding forward positions as long as possible, but without using up too many troops, and gradually falling back to prepared positions further south. The Japanese marshalled and reinforced their large armies partly by landings at Singgora and Patani in Thai territory, and partly by bringing them from Thailand by railway. They had massed considerable air forces in Thailand, and were able not only to use Sin-

gorra aerodrome, but also a shadow aerodrome of very large size—which it is now known had been secretly built with, of course, Thai connivance—near the regular civil aerodrome.

The enemy suffered heavily at the beginning of the landing operations. On 5-6 December a large convoy of Japanese transports, escorted by warships, had been sighted by our reconnaissance planes steaming south from Bangkok. Dutch submarines, co-operating with the British Fleet, were moved north into the Gulf of Siam and, after the outbreak of war, sank four of the troopships, drowning 4,000 Japanese soldiers. On the night of 8 December the Japanese, using armoured invasion barges, attempted to land on the coast near the Northern Malayan aerodrome of Kota Bharu. They were heavily attacked in the moonlight by Hudson bombers of the Royal Australian Air Force and by torpedo-bombers of the Royal Air Force. Two Japanese warships were hit and a number of the invasion bombers sunk with their human cargoes. This landing attempt was a failure. At dawn the Japanese warships and transports withdrew hurriedly and the Japanese troops which had survived the air attack and reached the shore were annihilated by the British troops.

Kota Bharu fell two days later to another land attack by troops landed further north. The aerodrome itself was out of use, having been flooded by the monsoon rains. It was defended by the twenty-three-year-old Lieutenant John Christopher Close, of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, and twelve Indian soldiers. This officer, who was awarded the Military Cross for his bravery, and his handful of men fought a gallant action against overwhelming numbers of the enemy, acting as a rearguard while the aerodrome ground staff and other personnel withdrew. The fate of the heroic little party is unknown. Other columns of Japanese troops crossed the northern part of the frontier into the province of Kedah, and, despite violent opposition, reached the coast opposite Penang Island on 19 December.

Penang Island, only lightly garrisoned, was a position of importance. Georgetown, the capital, is an important shipping port for the tin mines on the mainland, and had a large European and native population. There were no anti-aircraft guns and, at the beginning, no defence by fighter aeroplanes. Its fortifications and batteries of artillery all faced the sea, and there were no defences on the land side. For two days and nights it was unmercifully bombed by waves of Japanese aircraft, heavy casualties being inflicted on the unfortunate inhabitants. On the third day, four Buffalo fighters arrived on the scene, shot down a number of Japanese aircraft, and provided some relief. The overrunning of Wellesley Province on the mainland and the State of Kedah nevertheless rendered Penang Island untenable. The small garrison and as many as possible of the civil population was evacuated. There was a failure to destroy objects of military importance to the enemy. It has been reported that most of the population were in a state of panic, the Asiatics had fled to the jungle,



and there was a general breakdown of the civil administration. The electric power station was destroyed, but not the wireless station, and the Japanese at once began to use it for propaganda broadcasting. They also captured a large number of motor vehicles and about a hundred small coasting vessels, steam launches, and the like, which were of great value to them for further operations.

There have been ugly reports current about failure of duty on the part of the civil administration and others. It is as well, therefore, to give the official account of these events in the words of Lord Moyne, Secretary of State for the Colonies, speaking in the House of Lords on 28 January 1942 (*Official Report, Volume 121, No. 19*):

"The withdrawal of troops from Penang was due to urgent military need to reinforce the 11th Indian Division, which was threatened with encirclement and destruction on the mainland. Owing to the position of defencelessness in Penang, it was decided on 13 December that women and children who wished to leave should be enabled to reach a place of safety. On 15 December, as it was impossible to cover the island from the mainland, notice was given that evacuation was to take place within thirty-six hours. Secrecy was ordered so as to minimize the risk of the refugees being cut off by an attack. It was therefore only on the morning of 16 December that public notification was given through the police that evacuation must be complete that same night.

"By that time the Asiatic population had suffered over a thousand casualties, and had been so scattered under continuous air raids that labour could no longer be organized. The town had been in flames for many days. Many dead and dying could not be extricated from the ruins, and as explosives and fires were ruled out complete destruction was impossible in the time. It was physically impossible, in the absence of labour, either to dump the various commodities into the water, or in the absence of crews, to remove them by small boats and sampans. There is no truth whatever in the suggestion that those who should have taken the situation in hand were the first to leave. Although stress had been laid upon the importance of evacuating European males for defence purposes elsewhere, many of the leading Europeans, headed by Dr. Evans, the chief medical officer at Penang, stayed behind to look after the population and to tend the wounded. They therefore fell into Japanese hands."

Besides Dr. Evans, there was much devoted and gallant service by British and native leaders, official and unofficial, undismayed by the sudden tragedy which had overwhelmed them. The local Salvation Army officers behaved heroically. Two of these who particularly distinguished themselves were Major F. Harvey and his twenty-two-year-old Chinese assistant, Lieutenant Foo Kia-peng.

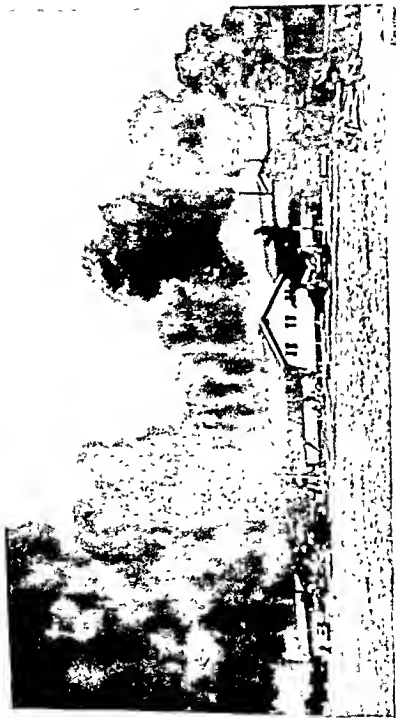
throughout the raids these two officers succoured the wounded, organized rescue parties to extricate people buried under ruins, comforted and encouraged the civil population, and set a splendid example of courage and endurance. They refused to evacuate Pangkajene, and stayed on the island to meet the invaders so that they could continue to help and encourage the people.

The hundreds of Japanese aeroplanes gradually concentrated in the fighting areas besides persistently dive-bombing our troops and machine-gunning transport on the roads, attacked other towns in northern Malaya from the very beginning of the operations. Widespread damage was done at Sumgei and Alorstar, with the not unnatural result that most of the Asiatic civil population took to the jungles. This led to a shortage of labour, a breakdown in the essential services, the closing of shops and a food shortage. As the invaders moved south, and the British command realized that it would be difficult to stop them, the scorched earth policy was applied. Whatever failures there were in this respect at the beginning of the battle of Malaya, not much was left to the invaders as they moved south. The European managers of mines and plantations faithfully destroyed the fruits of their lifework and all their property. Military demolitions were also carried out with great efficiency, principally by Indian sappers. They even succeeded in carrying out important demolitions on Thai territory. One party of Bombay sappers supported by Punjabis pushed forward from Kroh in the north of Kerantan province and destroyed the bridges on the Bangkok-Kota Bahru railway where it runs through the mountains. They also wrecked the road where it passes through the narrow valley for seven miles at a place called the Ledge. Here the hills run steeply down to the side of the road which is only ten to fourteen feet wide. This narrow pass was thoroughly blocked with explosives in face of the enemy, and the Indian force successfully withdrew having rendered this line of communication impassable for motor traffic for some considerable time.

It took fifty-five days for the invaders to fight their way down the Malay isthmus to the Johore Strait, despite their overwhelming strength and preponderance of air force. In all the circumstances, the holding up of the invasion for this length of time was highly creditable. The white troops engaged suffered terribly from the climate and the conditions under which they fought. Intense heat and a high degree of humidity were exhausting. Even at night the temperature was usually 88°. During this rainy season the daily downpour of tropical rain soaked them. The mosquitoes were vicious, and in the swamps was a plague of leeches which caused great suffering. The mosquitoes spread malaria, and the strain on even the fittest and youngest troops was terrific. Much of the country is cut up by rivers and streams usually infested with crocodiles. The presence of these ugly brutes who, contrary to popular belief, will rarely attack a man unless wounded, is trying to the nerves of soldiers who have to swim

in their haunts. It was almost impossible to hold any defensive line with the number of soldiers available. The Japanese divisions employed had been specially trained in jungle fighting. They carried very light equipment including miniature tommy-guns and rifles of small calibre but capable of inflicting deadly wounds. Their usual tactics were to infiltrate through the jungles and outflank our men, and they succeeded in this again and again. When the enemy reached the west coast after the fall of Penang, they brought shallow draught craft overland from Siam and made use of all the native fishing-boats, barges, and small craft they could lay their hands on. The west coast of Malaya is fringed by shallow water extending in some cases fifteen miles from the shore. There are numerous creeks and much of the shore is covered with thick mangrove swamps. The Japanese were able to spread an air umbrella over their flanking parties, and by their superiority in numbers in the air prevented our Air Force from interfering. Small parties in these various types of craft were continually creeping down the coast to attack our troops in the rear. In the result, the campaign was a series of withdrawals by our forces as they were outflanked or attacked in the rear by parties of Japanese who had either crept through the jungles or had effected landings behind them from the sea.

Another difficulty which faced our soldiers was that of distinguishing between Japanese, Malays, and Chinese. British soldiers from the mountains of Scotland or the English shires, who had not been long in the country, could not identify an apparently harmless Malay farmer or fisherman who in reality was a disguised Japanese trooper. Many of the Japanese snipers who made themselves a continual nuisance, were dressed like the natives and wore rubber shoes which enabled them to climb up the trees and hide among the branches, where it was difficult to dislodge them. These operations by small bodies of Japanese guerillas, who might number anything from 2 to 300, would have been impossible in China. There, any isolated Japanese would have his throat cut by the local population. As already explained, the native population of Malaya had not been taught that this was their war. Most of them played the part of spectators, yet they were friendly to the defenders, and many hundreds of British and Indian soldiers who were cut off owe their lives and their ability to rejoin their units to the help given to them by Malay farmers or Chinese shopkeepers at the risk of their own lives. Nor did the natives fall to the blandishments of the Japanese. At the beginning, especially in the northern provinces, the invaders went out of their way to curry favour with the natives. They were plentifully supplied with forged paper money and obviously had orders to ingratiate themselves. Many thousands of leaflets in the Malayan language and the Chinese and Indian dialects calling on the population to help the invaders, were dropped by aeroplanes. These leaflets were treated with contempt.



HANGARS ON FARM AT HILKAM, AMERICA, HAWAII



E.N.A.

GUAM



HONGKONG: BUSINESS QUARTER

Top left

The Australian forces under General Gordon Bennett, and other troops, had been held in reserve with the intention of holding a defensive line between the Maur river on the west and the Endau river on the east coast. This line, which runs roughly east and west, is some ninety miles from Johore Bahru, the southernmost town in Johore Province. Johore Bahru is on the railway, and from here is built the causeway carrying the railway and road straight across the Strait to join Singapore Island. This defensive line had the advantage of being fairly secure on its flanks, thanks to these two considerable rivers, and also of having behind it an important lateral road stretching from the west of the Peninsula at Betu Parat to Mersing on the east. Many weeks and much labour were spent by Australian, British, and Indian troops forming these reserves in preparing field positions and fortifications.

By 1 January 1942, the invaders had crossed the frontier from Perak into Selangor State, bringing them to within 156 miles of Singapore on the west side of the Peninsula. Fierce fighting was going on for possession of the port of Kuantan on the east coast, 160 miles from Singapore. The Japanese had now somewhat changed their tactics and were relying on masses of dive-bombers, operating fifty and sixty at a time, and numerous light tanks of the whippet type.

The original holding force had now been fighting continuously for three weeks aided by such reinforcements as could be spared. Most of them had been fighting every day and all day, retreating at night and then digging themselves in just before daylight. Our troops were very tired, but whenever they met the enemy on anything like equal terms, especially at close quarters, they had shown their fighting superiority. Though many of these Japanese offensives were pushed home with gallantry it is, nevertheless, true that in hand-to-hand encounters our soldiers, both British and Indian, proved themselves the better warriors.

A large British convoy with reinforcements had by now reached Singapore, including some much-needed Hurricane fighter aircraft. This convoy had a narrow escape in the Straits of Malacca. An attack by sixty Japanese bombers was threatened, but a providential rainstorm came on and the attack did not develop. With these reinforcements and the very modern fighter aeroplanes it was hoped to hold the capital of the Federated States, and the second most important city in Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, and also Port Swettenham which is joined to Kuala Lumpur by a branch railway. Here once again, however, the British positions were outflanked by Japanese landings in their rear from small craft towed by launches and protected by strong air squadrons. The important tin centre of Ipoh, some sixty miles to the north, had fallen in the same way through the flanks of the defending forces being turned. These landing parties affected several lodgments at the mouth of the Bernam river and by infiltrating south-

wards through the rubber estates threatened the rear of the forces covering the city. The extensive rubber plantations, with their useful roads, enabled the enemy to use tanks and, after more hard fighting, Kuala Lumpur and Port Swettenham had to be abandoned. This meant the whole line moving back to avoid the outflanking of the defenders on the east coast.

The withdrawal was carried out in good order.

The last fortnight had been spent in slowing up the Japanese advance by every means possible, including railway, road, and bridge demolitions, and the moving up of the reserves of Singapore Island to the line already described on which it was intended to make a final and, it was hoped, successful stand. Between 20 and 26 January, battle was joined on the Maur-Endau line. The British forces now had more artillery, including anti-tank weapons. In this important engagement the Australians, holding the east flank of the line, put twenty-four Japanese tanks out of action. The Japanese forces, which had been considerably strengthened, now included a division of picked troops of the Japanese Imperial Guard. On 26 January a Japanese landing was made from the sea at the port of Endau, about twenty miles north-west of Mersing on the right of the line. Only about half the soldiers got ashore. A British bombing squadron hit and damaged the escorting cruisers, scored twelve hits on one of the troop transports and sank a number of barges and landing craft by bombs or machine-gun fire. In the air fighting which accompanied this landing, twelve enemy fighters were destroyed and at least four others were damaged. Nevertheless, enough of the Japanese landing parties and their road transport made good their foothold to strengthen the attacking forces substantially.

By 27 January the enemy had captured Batu Pahat on the west coast on the left of the line and was threatening to break through at Kulang in the centre, where the main railway line crosses the lateral road. The enemy penetration on the left was made possible by the extreme exhaustion of the defending troops. With their communications threatened, the Australians holding the right of the line had no option other than to retreat from their strong positions. This was particularly galling, as all attempts by the enemy to break through had been beaten off, and the troops believed they could hold their long and laboriously prepared defences indefinitely. The enemy apparently believed this also and called in the aid of his navy.

Since the loss of the two British heavy men-of-war, the Japanese with their strong air forces in support, had been able to make full use of its superior sea power. On 26 January a Japanese cruiser and three destroyers were reported off the port of Endau at the mouth of the river, apparently taking up positions to bombard the Australian right flank on the sea coast. Two British destroyers, H.M.S. *Thanet* (Commander B. S. Davies, R.N.), and the *Vampire*, of the Royal Australian Navy (Commander W. T. A. Moran, R.A.N.), were,



headed by the pipers of the Gordons. This last march was accomplished under the light of a full moon. A breach was then blown in the Causeway, and the investment of Singapore Island had begun. The enemy claimed in his official communiqué to have taken 8,000 prisoners and to have buried 5,000 of our officers and men. Though these figures are an exaggeration, our losses were considerable.

General Percival, who had taken over the command when Sir Henry Pownall was appointed Chief of Staff to General Wavell, Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific, issued the following message to the troops:

"The battle of Malaya has come to an end and the battle of Singapore has started. For nearly two months our troops have fought an enemy on the mainland who has had the advantage of great air superiority and considerable freedom of movement by sea.

"Our task has been both to impose losses on the enemy and to gain time to enable the forces of the Allies to be concentrated for this struggle in the Far East. To-day we stand beleaguered in our island fortress.

"Our task is to hold this fortress until help can come—as assuredly it will come. This we are determined to do.

"In carrying out this task we want the active help of every man and woman in the fortress. There is work for all to do: Any enemy who sets foot in our fortress must be dealt with immediately. The enemy within our gates must be ruthlessly weeded out. There must be no more loose talk and rumour-mongering.

"Our duty is clear. With firm resolve and fixed determination we shall win through."

So ended the battle of Malaya.

Its most important result was to bring the Japanese to the north shore of the Strait of Johore thus rendering the great naval base and dockyard untenable. The principal military aerodrome to the south-east of the naval base was now within artillery range and useless as a landing ground. The two other island aerodromes were under long range artillery fire. The Japanese had possession of the string of aerodromes which had been established for the use of the Royal Air Force and for civil aviation in the Malay Peninsula. They also had the use of the small ports and landing places on the east coast of the Peninsula and the whole of the railway from Bangkok to Johore Babru. So long, however, as Singapore Island, with its batteries of long range guns defending the minfields, could be held, the vitally important Straits of Malacca were denied to the enemy. While the Australian division and the Gordon Highlanders were fighting the last rearguard action, long range American bombers of the Flying Fortress type arrived on the scene. They proceeded to bomb

the principal aerodromes in Japanese occupation, including Kota Bharu.

In summarizing the campaign, it should be appreciated that the bulk of the Japanese armies and a greater part of their equipment were not landed from the sea but came by railway from Bangkok, the capital of Thailand. This railway runs down the Kra isthmus, and for a long distance passes close to the Burmese frontier. It is curious that no arrangements had been made for impeding or damaging this railway from Burmese territory in the early stages of the campaign. It would not appear to have been difficult for even a few hundred troops of the Commando type to have attacked this railway and blown up the bridges. A landing from the sea, even at night, by a force sailing from Rangoon and disembarking on the west side of the Kra isthmus would have been a serious threat to the Japanese. Furthermore, such seaborne reinforcements—and there was no Japanese naval opposition—could have prolonged the defence of the important aerodrome at Victoria Point and even of the other aerodromes and the port of Tavoy further north.

As it was, the Victoria Point district was evacuated almost immediately, without any serious attempt at resistance. There seems to have been a lack of liaison between the commands in Malaya and Burma. After all, they were not fighting separate wars. If the long southern 'tail' of the Burmese province of Tenasserim was not considered by the Burma Higher Command to be important for the defence of Burma proper, and difficult to hold against an invasion from Thailand, it was of value to the defenders of Malaya and a base, or jumping-off ground, for counter-attacks against the main supply line of the great Japanese army operating in Malaya—and this supply line was the Bangkok-Singapore railway.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE "PRINCE OF WALES" AND "REPULSE"

THE new fast battleship *Prince of Wales* and the battle-cruiser *Repulse* were sunk off the east coast of Malaya on 9 December 1941 by Japanese torpedo-carrying aeroplanes. This was the greatest disaster suffered by the Royal Navy for more than a century. In the war of 1914-18 a squadron of two armoured cruisers and some older warships under the command of Admiral Sir Reginald Cradock was defeated off Coronel, on the coast of Chile, by a German squadron under the command of Admiral Graf von Spee which included two more modern and powerful vessels, the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*.

of that day. This was the first fleet action lost by the Royal Navy for a century; and though the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* were destroyed by air attack, the action must rank as a naval engagement, and was our second defeat in this long and eventful period of history. This defeat had a profound effect not only on the Malayan campaign, but on the whole strategical position in the South China Sea and the Western Pacific. The two ships-of-the-line had only arrived at Singapore during the previous month. They were commanded by Vice-Admiral Sir Tom Phillips, who now assumed command of the China station. He was killed in the action.

The decision to send these two valuable warships to the Far East has been criticized. Strategically it would appear to have been a wise move considering all the circumstances. The decision was taken before the loss of H.M.S. *Barham* in the Mediterranean during the Libyan operations by submarine attack on 25 November 1941. At the outbreak of war there were 15 ships-of-the-line, battleships and battle-cruisers on the Navy List and a large shipbuilding programme was in hand. When it was decided to send these two large ships to the East the battleship *Royal Oak* had been sunk in Seapa Flow and the battle cruiser *Hood* in action against the German battleship *Bismarck*. Despite these losses reinforcements had brought the British battle line, or were about to bring it, up to a strength of 18 capital ships. The American Navy, with 17 capital ships and a number nearing completion, was participating in the war against Germany and Italy to the extent that American men-of-war were patrolling and convoying in the Atlantic. The German fleet of large warships was reduced to one ship-of-the-line, the *Tirpitz*, sister ship of the *Bismarck*, the modern battle-cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* of this war being then regarded as immobilized at Brest by air attack. The *Tirpitz* was playing an important rôle in the Baltic, where the Russians had two old but powerful reconstructed battleships. All sound strategical principles pointed to her staying there. If the *Tirpitz* were to emulate the *Bismarck* and venture out into the Atlantic on some expedition it would be a satisfactory development from the Allied point of view. The lack of permanent injury to the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* was not known, owing to a faulty Intelligence Service.

In the Mediterranean were four Italian ships-of-the-line at the most, even allowing for the successful repair of certain of the large Italian warships damaged in the air attack by British torpedo-bombers at Taranto. There was thus a considerable margin in the largest types of warships in the combined anti-Axis navies. The Royal Navy was short of cruisers and destroyers, as it was in the last war, and as it was short of frigates in all previous wars. No navies engaged in active operations ever have enough cruising and scouting craft; but the functions of battleships and battle-cruisers are distinct and different. They cannot do the work of light cruisers and destroyers,

and vice versa. The ships could be spared and at Singapore they could perform a valuable rôle.

The *Prince of Wales*, a new battleship of 35,000 tons, well protected, with a speed of 30 knots and a powerful armament of ten modern 14-inch guns was a match for any of the Japanese battleships and faster than most of them. The Japanese Navy may well have been strengthened during 1941 by two new battleships, the *Nissin* and *Takamatu*, though they might not have been completed at this time. The rest of the Japanese line-of-battle was composed of ten old battleships of much slower speed than the *Prince of Wales*. The *Repulse*, though an old ship, had been reconstructed and renovated and had a speed equal to the *Prince of Wales*, though she was not so well protected or so heavily gunned. By all recognized naval canons the functions of these two ships should have been to act as a 'fleet in being': that is to say, they would avoid action with superior forces but, by their very presence in the East, contain a number of the more powerful Japanese units. The Japanese Commander-in-Chief would be reluctant to separate his fleet so long as the American Pacific fleet had not been disposed of. Before the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour this fleet was more powerful than his own.

There have been many examples in naval history of the successful employment of an inferior force in this way. The most recent was that of the German High Sea Fleet in the war of 1914-18. Though inferior to the British Grand Fleet so long as the High Sea Fleet was in being, that is to say in existence and ready for action, we were always in doubt as to the intentions of the German Admiralty and had to maintain a more powerful fleet, with all its scouting and auxiliary craft and flotillas, waiting at Scapa Flow or the Firth of Forth for any adventure upon which it might embark. So long as the High Sea Fleet lay ready for sea at Wilhelmshaven or Kiel, the principal German naval bases, we were deterred from any adventures of our own in the Heligoland Bight or in the Baltic.

The most serious grounds for criticism of the strategy of detaching this force is that, under modern conditions, large surface warships cannot successfully engage in ocean operations without air support; and, as the range of defending land-based aircraft is limited this means, in practice, that every squadron of ships-of-the-line must have one or more aircraft carriers in company. The aircraft carrier accommodates fighter aeroplanes, reconnaissance aeroplanes and operational aeroplanes such as high-level bombers or torpedo-bombers. In the numerous actions fought in this war in the Mediterranean, especially those resulting from the passing of important convoys through the narrow central channel, the big ships sent with the convoys in case the Italian battleships should become venturesome were always accompanied by an aircraft carrier, whose fighting aeroplanes were able to play a great rôle in frustrating the attacks of the enemy shore-based aeroplanes. Though we suffered minor losses and damage, several

brisk actions of this sort have been sought with advantage to ourselves and the convoys taken through the danger zone successfully.

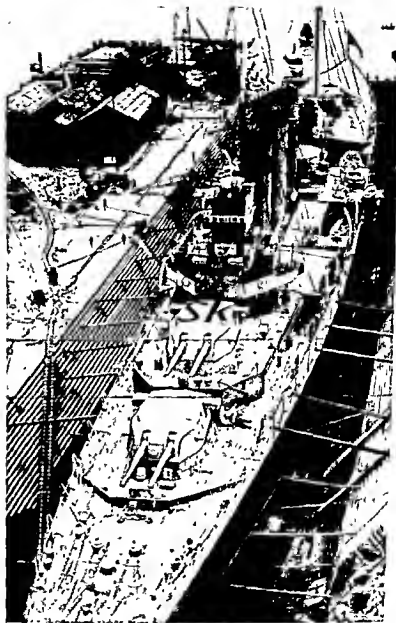
The official defence for not sending an aircraft-carrier with the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* is that, while admitting the importance of this support, no aircraft carrier was immediately available. We had suffered some losses in this valuable type of ship and at this particular period a number had been more or less seriously damaged and were under repair. Only one aircraft-carrier was actually available and ready for sea, and it was decided, no doubt quite reasonably, that she must remain with the Home Fleet. Whether in these circumstances it was wise to send these two valuable, and not easily replaced, big ships to the Pacific is open to doubt.

We now leave the sphere of strategy and enter that of tactics. The two ships proceeded into an area where there was danger of attack from Japanese shore-based aircraft, with only a weak destroyer screen against the submarine danger, and without the support of shore-based aircraft to defend them. The object of the cruise was to intercept and destroy a Japanese convoy of troopships steaming southwards down the Gulf of Siam to attack Malaya. Before judgment is passed on Admiral Phillips for what might now appear to have been an imprudent operation in the light of subsequent events, it is necessary to know the instructions he was given before leaving Britain, and any instructions or orders he received subsequently. These will not be disclosed for many years. In the Cretan operations in 1941 when naval, military, and air forces were involved, many telegraphed suggestions and proposals were sent to the Commander-in-Chief by the Defence Committee of the War Cabinet. Obviously direct orders, could not be sent either to the Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean or to Admiral Phillips at Singapore, for a wide latitude must be left to the Commander in the field of battle; but telegraphed suggestions are much the same thing as orders, unless the Commander in the field or, as in this case, at sea, is a man of very strong character and independence of mind. If, for example, it was suggested from London that it was necessary for Admiral Phillips to take some quick action to intercept at sea a Japanese invading army, the Admiral would require to be a man of strong personality not to interpret this as an order. In addition, the natural inclination of any British naval officer in such circumstances would be to take action. Here was a great Japanese Army with all its artillery and equipment at sea in slow merchant ships, lightly escorted as revealed by air reconnaissance, and about to invade British territories of great importance. For a British admiral to remain quiescent under the guns of the fortress of Singapore in such circumstances would be extremely galling. During the greater part of the war years preceding these events Sir Tom Phillips had been Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff and Deputy to the First Sea Lord at the Admiralty. He had played a leading part as the second most important staff officer in London, in the conduct



E.N.A.

HONGKONG: VIEWED FROM THE PEAK



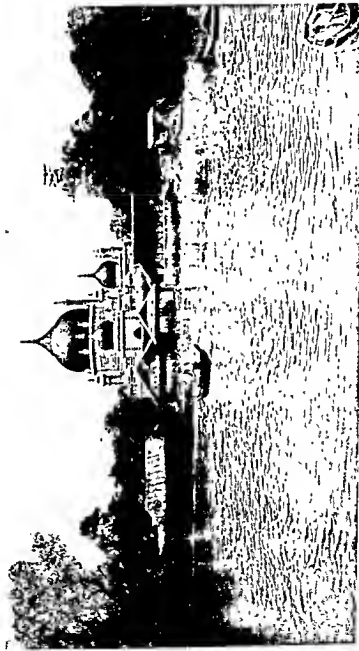
L.A.A.  
H.M.S. "SUFFOLK" IN DRY DOCK AT KOWLOON, HONGKONG



SUNGEI BESI TIN MIN, MALAYA

E.V.C.





Mosque at Alor Star, Malaya

E.N.A.

or planning or direction of all the operations of the war. He knew the policy of the War Cabinet and of the Board of Admiralty, and he knew everything that was to be known about the naval campaign against Germany and Italy. In the Norwegian campaign the then Assistant Chief of Naval Staff observed how the Commander-in-Chief of the Home Fleet had declined to risk his surface warships in the Skagerrak, despite the tempting target of German troopships pouring soldiers and supplies into Norway. He knew how the promising amphibian operation to recapture Trondheim, before the Germans there had had time to turn round, had been countermanded because of the risk of attack on the warships by land-based aircraft. He knew that the other project of recapturing the coastal aerodrome of Stavanger had also been countermanded for the same reason; and he had suffered with the rest of his countrymen as he received news of the consequential débâcle of our land forces. Admiral Phillips had rejoiced at the successful attack on the Italian battle fleet in Taranto by torpedo-carrying aircraft and subsequently by high-level bombers; and he had rejoiced also over the battle off Cape Matapan where important units of the Italian fleet were damaged at sea by air attack, and later brought to action by surface warships and destroyed. He had followed the events of the cruise of the *Bismarck* and had directed or helped to direct the dispositions which led to her destruction largely through successful attack from the air. In all these events Admiral Phillips had been behind the scenes, and, being a man of superior intelligence, he had fully appreciated the lessons. Nevertheless, when he received the reports of his reconnaissance aircraft that the Japanese Armada was at sea he seems to have been principally interested in whether the escorting warships included an aircraft-carrier. Having satisfied himself that no aircraft-carrier was present he would appear to have overlooked the possibility of attack by Japanese shore-based aircraft.

Having decided to put to sea, he asked the Commander-in-Chief, an airman, Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, for the support of land-based aircraft. These were not immediately available, partly because the northern aerodromes in Malaya were either unusable on account of the monsoon rains, or were under enemy attack, or because our aircraft were engaged in immediate operations in support of the army. It is tragic to note that shore-based fighter aircraft arrived over the ocean graves of these two tall ships very shortly after they had plunged to their doom and their assailants had flown away.

When the squadron left harbour the Admiral believed that he would have fighter protection, up to the limit of range of the fighters available. Only when he was at sea was he informed that fighter protection was not available in the northern areas in which he intended to operate. There were low-lying clouds and poor visibility so in the circumstances he decided to proceed with his cruise. The Admiral was, however, prudent enough to have decided that if the weather

cleared or if he was spotted by enemy reconnaissance planes, he would turn back to the protection of his own shore-based aircraft. This is exactly what happened. The weather did clear, a Japanese reconnaissance plane was sighted which meant that he had been sighted too, and course was set for Singapore. The expedition was to intercept the Japanese invading fleet directed to a landing at Singgora, Petani, or near Kota Bahru. Information, which proved false, was then received to the effect that another Japanese landing was being attempted farther south on the peninsula, apparently at Kuantan, an obvious point for Japanese disembarkation. This would have meant an even more dangerous threat to Singapore and the naval base, and Admiral Phillips decided to alter course towards the land and to investigate. Nothing was seen of the reported invading forces and it was on his way back to Singapore that the squadron was attacked.

The first assault was made by high-level bombers operating at a great height and dropping their bombs with considerable accuracy. This was a feint and the real attack was made by eighty long-range torpedo-carrying two-engined aircraft carrying two torpedoes each. They had flown four hundred miles from their aerodromes. Despite a terrific barrage by the two battleships and their escorting destroyers, which destroyed a high percentage of the attackers, enough torpedoes were fired into the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* to sink them both with heavy loss of life, including the gallant Admiral himself. As already stated, the Japanese aircraft then flew off, leaving the destroyers unmolested to pick up survivors; and soon afterwards the missing British fighter aircraft appeared on the scene.

Apparently, therefore, the possibility of such an attack had not been sufficiently appreciated. That the Japanese had detailed this strong force of long-distance aeroplanes for the precise purpose of attacking the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* as soon as they put to sea is now perfectly obvious. It was a trap, and we fell into it.

Several important lessons emerge from this tragedy. Among these, I suggest, are the following:

- (1) Warships without air support cannot operate within flying range of hostile aerodromes except at great risk. This particularly applies to the great ships of the line whose numbers must always be limited and whose replacement is a long process. As a corollary, if shore-based aircraft are not available, aircraft-carriers must accompany a fleet on active service. This is borne out by the Japanese naval losses from attacks by British, American, and Dutch aircraft in this same campaign.
- (2) The case for placing shore-based aircraft and aerodromes where they can assist naval operations, under the direct command of the naval Commander-in-Chief, is greatly strengthened.

- (3) The provision of numerous long-range fighters, specially designed for service with the fleet, and based on shore aerodromes, is urgent.
- (4) More aircraft-carriers are required. The large ships of the *Ark Royal* type are admirable for their purpose, but because of their great size and cost not enough of them can be provided. A smaller and more modest design is required. This smaller type of aircraft-carrier might not be so efficient as her larger sisters with their great landing decks, but more could be made available. Suitable passenger liners, for example, could be converted, especially if more use was made of the catapult system of launching aircraft. This method has been successfully used for the defence of convoys and its use might be extended to the defence of war fleets.
- (5) I have for long advocated the provision of special anti-aircraft vessels for the protection of great battleships. The greatest danger for the large warship is the torpedo-carrying aeroplane. If enough of them can be brought into action against the battleships and there is not a strong enough air umbrella the battleships will be sunk. The sort of ships I suggest are fast vessels, either merchant ships or ships specially built for the purpose, with flattened decks mounting a very powerful battery of anti-aircraft guns and with the hulls so sub-divided and protected and stored with buoyant material as to be practically unsinkable. In waters where enemy aircraft can operate each battleship should have one of these vessels steaming close alongside her on either beam. They would act as cushions against torpedoes and their anti-aircraft guns would help the defence. If enemy battleships had to be engaged then the cushion ships, as I call them, would drop astern.

Those who have for long advocated the abandonment of the very large super-dreadnought type of battleship have now returned to the charge. Their case is that sea power can be more conveniently exercised by a larger number of smaller, but still powerful, fighting ships. I have often espoused this argument myself. I do not feel sure now, however, if the case for the small battleship is proved. Without a certain displacement of, say, 30,000 tons or above, the requisite speed, armoured protection and gun power cannot be provided. The *Bismarck*, for example, took a lot of sinking. She would have had a longer run if Grand Admiral Raeder had waited till her sister-ship, the *Tirpitz*, was ready and sent them both out to sea with a couple of fast aircraft-carriers loaded with squadrons of fighter aeroplanes.

This controversy of the large *versus* the small battleships can only be solved by the ordeal of battle. A majority of the admirals of all

the leading naval Powers and of Germany advocate the very large and powerful ship-of-the-line (capital ship is a misnomer), and all are building them. There is no argument now about the need for strong air protection for the most powerful ships the naval architects can design. Indeed, the larger and therefore the more valuable the battleship the more air protection and destroyer protection against submarine attack she requires.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CAMPAIGN IN THE PHILIPPINES

IT had for long been recognized that in a war against America the Japanese would attempt the conquest of the Philippines as early as possible in the campaign; but that such an attempt would be made became even more probable after the Japanese had established themselves in South China. Lying on the east side of the South China Sea, the Philippines form a convenient base for cutting Japanese lines of communication to Canton, where they maintained a large army, and also for cutting off all Japanese commerce by sea to the Dutch East Indies, Australia, Malaya, and the Indian Ocean. As already explained, the American plans were to keep their main fleet in the Hawaiian Islands and, in the event of a Japanese threat to the Philippines after war had broken out, to move westwards across the Pacific, using the advanced bases of Midway, Guam, and Wake for refuelling purposes. A small American naval squadron was stationed permanently at the naval base of Cavite, some ten miles south of Manila, and floating-dock and repair plants were established at Subig Bay on the north-west of the Bataan Peninsula. This mountainous peninsula shelters Manila Bay, which is thirty-five miles in width, from the violent typhoons which rage from time to time in the South China Sea.

At the outbreak of war the American Asiatic Fleet consisted of a 10,000-ton cruiser, a 7,000-ton cruiser, and a small flotilla of destroyers and motor torpedo-boats. There were considerable naval and army air establishments, but the whole garrison only consisted of two divisions of American regular troops, numbering about 20,000, plus the Filipino army, organized in six divisions and in process of expansion. There were 12,000 Philippine scouts, mostly recruited from the mountain tribes, 20,000 regular troops, and 100,000 reservists who had had a short course of military training. Even, therefore, after complete mobilization, not more than 150,000 trained soldiers were available to occupy this immense area. This army was far too small to hold the Philippine Islands against an enemy enjoying command of the sea.

The Archipelago contains more than 7,000 islands, large and small, with an area of 114,400 square miles. The two largest islands are Luzon, in which is the capital, Manila, and has an area of 40,814 square miles, and Mindanao, 36,900 square miles. The total population of the group is over 12,000,000, of which about 700,000 was concentrated in the capital. The American plan for the defence of the Philippines, once it had been decided (after much discussion) that they must be defended, was based on the principle that the islands could hold out long enough to allow for an expedition arriving to relieve them. This is the old-established principle of British naval strategy, and it has been adopted by the British Admiralty and Defence Committees for more than a century. The outposts of Empire, important fuelling stations, and positions of great strategical value such as Aden, Malta, or Trincomalee in Ceylon, to take three examples, were provided with defence and garrisons strong enough to hold out against an attacking army and fleet sent by any probable enemy for a period calculated to be long enough for the relief expedition to arrive. The difficulty of providing a larger garrison of American regular troops is explained by the smallness of the American metropolitan standing army in normal times. Furthermore, there had always been difficulties in persuading the American Congress to vote the necessary credits to increase the defences.

The natural policy was to help the Filipino Government to raise their own army and air force. It could not, however, be seriously put in hand until the necessary Act of Congress was passed in 1934 granting full future sovereign independence to the country. This was to be in operation by 1946. In view of the nature of the population and the history of the islands, this was no mean achievement. The Spaniards had ruled the Philippines, with various vicissitudes, for three centuries prior to the seizure of the islands by the Americans during their war with Spain in 1898. Spanish rule had decayed during the nineteenth century; a strong Nationalist movement had grown up, and if the Americans had not intervened the Philippines would probably have gone the way of the former Spanish colonies in Central and South America, and thrown off the suzerainty of Madrid. Nor were the turbulent islanders any more willing at the beginning to accept the suzerainty of Washington, and there were numerous insurrections of a serious nature for the next four years. The Americans then set to work with great skill and patience to win the trust of their new citizens. This was no easy task. Over ninety per cent of the population professed Christianity, either Roman Catholic or adhering to the independent Filipino Church, founded in 1901, and its dogma practically identical with Roman Catholicism. Though the educated classes spoke Spanish or English, and in later years mostly English, the native inhabitants of Malayan origin are divided into tribes speaking different languages and dialects. There are at least twelve separate native languages in wide use. Nevertheless, under a succession

of able governors, great educational and cultural progress was made, the productivity and commerce of the islands increased rapidly, railways, roads and aerodromes were built, and finally, the bulk of the inhabitants were persuaded of American good faith and came to believe in the policy laid down by President McKinley of training and accustoming the native inhabitants to rule and govern themselves.

Fortunately also, in later years a Filipino, Manuel Quezon, and an American, General MacArthur, emerged. Both were men of outstanding ability. Between them they gave the required leadership and example afterwards to bear such fine fruit. Don Quezon was elected the first President of the Commonwealth of the Philippines on 15 November 1935, and he appointed General MacArthur his principal military adviser. The General, after a brilliant military career in the United States Army, had just retired from the post of Chief of Staff. He retired from the United States Army in 1937. On his retirement from the American Army General MacArthur became a Field Marshal in the Philippine Army.

A year before the outbreak of the war with Japan, General MacArthur retired altogether, but in July 1941 President Roosevelt, with the full assent of President Quezon, invited him to return to the Philippines to reorganize the defences in view of the threatening situation in the Pacific. Very soon after his return to the Philippines the General applied to the American Government for reinforcements, especially of aeroplanes, but these were not forthcoming before the Japanese made their surprise attack.

This attack, like all the other Japanese expeditions in the Pacific, had been long prepared in great detail. There was a numerous Japanese population in the islands, and much underground work was done to create a 'fifth column'. Though not very successful, the Japanese succeeded in suborning no less a person than a certain Jorge B. Vargas, who held the position of Mayor of Greater Manila, and at one time was secretary to the President. Another traitor was 'General' Emilio Aguinaldo, now seventy-two years of age. Aguinaldo, personally a brave man and a good leader, now turned his coat for the third time. He rebelled against the Spaniards during their suzerainty, after swearing loyalty, and eventually made his peace with them and undertook to take up his residence in Hongkong. When the Spanish War broke out he offered his services to Admiral Dewey, lying with an American naval squadron in Bias Bay, a few miles from Hongkong. The Americans helped him with funds; he was landed on the Philippine coast, raised an army of irregulars, and was of considerable assistance to the Americans in ejecting the Spaniards. He even set up a form of government and had himself proclaimed President. When, however, the Americans took over the administration of the Philippines under the peace treaty with Spain, Aguinaldo turned his coat for the second time and supported an insurrection against his American friends. He was captured and the rebellion suppressed.

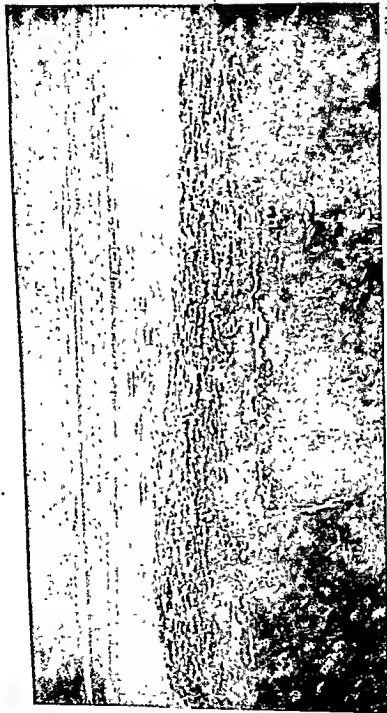
after much hard fighting. Aguinaldo was released soon afterwards on his undertaking to co-operate with the American régime, to which he took an oath of allegiance. In 1935, when the first presidential elections were held in the Philippines, Aguinaldo was one of the candidates, but lost to Quezon. Now he was to turn his coat for the third time, and break his oath of allegiance in his old age by becoming a tool of the Japanese invaders.

If the Japanese had little success with the Filipinos, they received plenty of help from their own nationals settled in considerable numbers in the Archipelago. Thus, at Davao, in the south of the island of Mindanao, there was a Japanese colony numbering about 20,000. Dangerous characters who were known were rounded up, but enough of these Japanese settlers and fishermen remained at large to constitute a considerable fighting force for the aid of the invaders. These Japanese residents had been organized in companies, battalions and brigades under officers who were members of the Japanese reserve forces. The nearest point in the Philippine Islands to the Japanese mainland is over 1,500 miles distant. Though Formosa had been organized as an advanced base, and troops were withdrawn from the Chinese mainland, most of the expedition started from Japan. Altogether 200,000 soldiers, with all the most modern equipment, including tanks and heavy artillery, and all the ground personnel, stores and equipment for the servicing of aeroplanes working from captured aerodromes, were transported by sea and landed at various points on the scattered coast of the Philippine Islands in a period of six weeks. This was the greatest sea expedition ever undertaken in war. One fleet of transports, which brought the troops for the main landings in the Luzon islands, alone numbered eighty vessels. Scores of armoured invasion barges, each capable of accommodating 150 soldiers and their equipment, were brought overseas. All these operations against the Philippines were organized on the most lavish scale. During this same period, six divisions of troops, with much artillery and a large covering air force, were deployed against Hongkong; 100,000 men, also with heavy equipment and lavish air support, were being used for the invasion of Malaya and the attack on Singapore; landings and force were being made in British North Borneo, Sarawak, and Dutch Borneo, in the Celebes Island, at Amboina and as far east as Rabaul (the capital of New Britain); and large armies were maintained on the Chinese mainland and as a covering force against the Russian Red Army of Eastern Siberia on the frontiers of Manchuria and Inner Mongolia. All these expeditions and garrisons were supported by large air concentrations, and the overseas expeditions were escorted by strong naval forces. When we consider that Borneo is over 2,000 miles from Japan, the Celebes 2,500 miles, and Rabaul over 3,000 miles from the nearest Japanese port, the immensity of the Japanese effort and the numbers of men and quantities of material employed becomes apparent. Fortunately, General MacArthur, ably



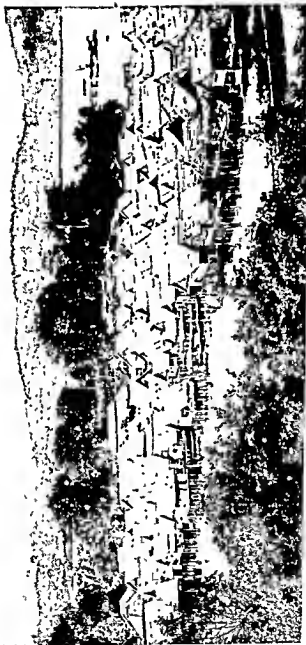
supported by President Quezon, had foreseen what might happen in certain eventualities. The far-flung group of islands and their great size made the defence problem difficult with the comparatively meagre forces at his disposal. The process of creating a national army out of the Filipino population had only been in operation for a few years, as already described. In the circumstances, the defence scheme adopted was to guard the most likely landing places by light forces and coastal batteries, with special attention to the defence of aerodromes. The air forces at his disposal were organized to deal with hostile warships or convoys approaching the shores, and these scored considerable success, as will presently be described. The main army was concentrated firstly for the defence of Manila, and then, if the capital proved impossible to hold, as a garrison for the Bataan Peninsula. This peninsula, about the size of the Isle of Wight, dominates Manila Bay. Off the southern point and in the entrance channel to Manila Bay lies the small rocky island of Corregidor. This island had been well fortified and converted into an eastern Gibraltar. The batteries included modern 16-inch naval guns of very long range. The Bataan Peninsula is really a range of mountains, two of which are extinct volcanoes with deep craters. The coasts of the peninsula are rocky, and there are high cliffs round most of the shore. The approaches from the mainland are swampy, and the muddy plain is dominated by the towering heights of the mountains. The volcanic craters provide natural shelter for materials and stores. So long as this position was held the use of Manila Bay and the naval base of Cavite would be denied to an enemy, as would Subig Bay to the north-west, with its secondary naval base. These positions on the peninsula were well provisioned, and stored with large reserves of ammunition and military equipment of all kinds. Here, if the worst came to the worst, the garrison would hold out until relief arrived either from the Hawaiian Islands or by way of Singapore.

The advance guard of the Japanese invasion arrived off the north coast of Luzon Island the day after the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour. The expedition must have been at sea, and probably started about the same time as the aircraft-carriers and special submarine tenders, with their escorting warships, sailed for Hawaii. A wireless signal giving the results of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour would be awaited before hostilities were begun against the Philippines. The first operations were directed against Aparri, on the north coast, Vigan, on the north-west coast, and in Lingayen Bay on the west. Parachute troops attempted to capture the aerodrome at Llagan, near the east coast, at the same time. These landings and attempts to land were supported by heavy bombing attacks and bombardments by the escorting men-of-war. All these first attacks were either repulsed, or the invaders were annihilated after landing, chiefly by Filipino troops. Those Japanese who succeeded in getting ashore and making their way into the hilly and jungle country, met their match in the



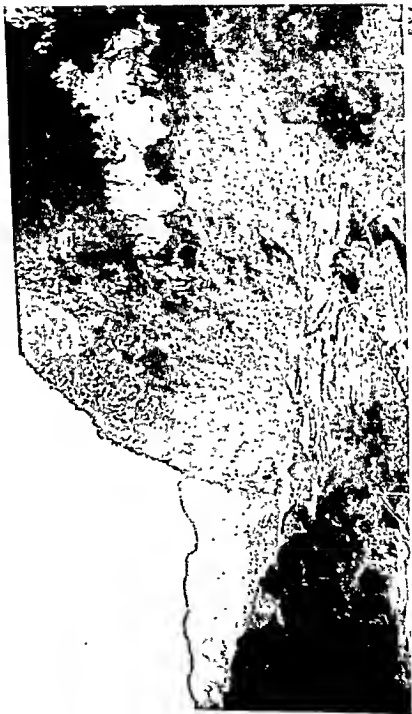
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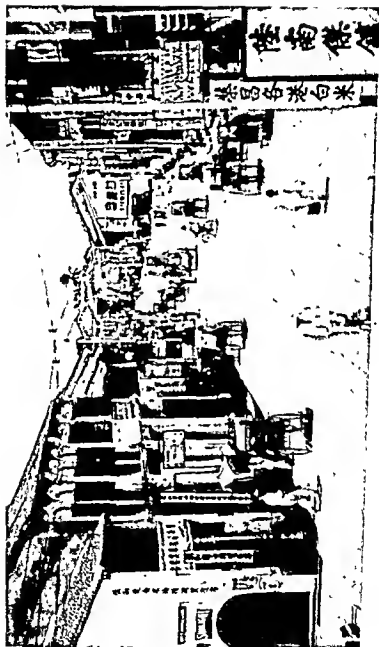
GLORGETOWN, PILSANG



NATIVE VILLAGE AT KELANTAN, MALAYA

TIN MINE NEAR IPOH, MALAYA





PENANG

Filipino irregulars. Fighting on their own soil, these descendants of the insurrectionaries who had given their Spanish overlords so much trouble in the past, were equally determined to resist Japanese domination. In bush fighting they were superior to the enemy. Not only were these preliminary attacks failures, but an American army bomber



sighted one of the escorting warships, the battleship *Haruna*, ten miles off the north-east coast of Luzon, and sank her with three direct hits. This was a serious loss to the invaders. The *Haruna* had a displacement of 29,330 tons, and though completed in 1915, had had a four years' refit and modernization between 1926 and 1930. She was armed with eight 14-inch guns and sixteen 6-inch guns. American naval bombers also scored a major success. They heavily bombed the Japanese battleship *Kongo*, and seriously crippled her. This was a sister ship of the *Haruna*, and the *Tokio* authorities later admitted that she had sunk, presumably on the way home.

The Japanese who landed at Vigan were exterminated by the

Filipino constabulary. In the first week's fighting General MacArthur's troops were completely successful. During these preliminary operations four Japanese troop transports were sunk, five badly damaged, and a number of attacking aircraft shot down, all by the American Air Force. The Japanese bombers during this first phase attacked Manila, dropping not only bombs but propaganda leaflets calling on the Filipinos to revolt. These Japanese expeditions were, however, only preliminaries. The main landings were effected in and near Lingayen Bay on a twenty-mile-long coast between Lingayen and Aggo between 22 and 29 December. Despite the fire of the American shore batteries and the fierce resistance of the troops guarding the coast, 100,000 Japanese troops with tanks made good their foothold, and by sheer weight of numbers forced their way inland. The invaders now had a foothold within a hundred miles of Manila, which is connected to Lingayen by railway. For the first forty-eight hours the invaders were unable to make much headway southwards against the American and Filipino troops, who now had the support of their own tanks and heavy artillery. Another invading army was landed at various points in the south of the island of Luzon, and by the end of December it was estimated that at least 200,000 troops had been landed at different points. The two main Japanese armies were finally able to force their way towards Manila, both from the north and the south, and to make rapid progress as soon as they had achieved air superiority.

The conduct of the invaders was abominable, and only equalled by their atrocities in the China campaigns. To mention two examples of Japanese debauchery: a party of Japanese scouts held up a bus-load of civilian passengers, most of whom were girl students from Manila University, trying to reach their homes in Pangasinan Province. All were Filipinos. They machine-gunned the bus, killing the driver, conductor, and the few male passengers, and then outraged the girls. The other act of barbarism I will specially mention was the repeated bombing of Manila after it had been declared an open town by General MacArthur and the anti-aircraft batteries and other defences removed. Furthermore, the black-out was countermanded, and the city brilliantly lighted. On 27 December 1941 two mass air attacks were made on the helpless capital, high explosive and incendiary bombs were dropped indiscriminately, and the planes flew low to machine-gun the panic-stricken and helpless population as they ran from burning and collapsing buildings. The historic walled city, a relic of the Spanish occupation, received particular attention, and most of it was burnt. The next night, while the fires were still burning at many points, another mass raid was made. The ancient cathedral was destroyed, and many other buildings of historic or cultural value shattered. In the daylight bombings churches and religious buildings of value were deliberately selected as targets. There could be no mistake, as they were large edifices of distinctive character, and stood

out from the mass of the small buildings and houses surrounding them. Amongst the irreplaceable buildings destroyed by these barbarians were the old church of Santa Domingo, which contained priceless art treasures and religious relics; the cathedral of the Immaculate Conception; the college of San Juan Lateran, with a valuable collection of ancient books and manuscripts; the convents of Santa Rosa and Santa Catalina; three well-known religious colleges and the hospital of San Juan De Dios. The civilian death roll was enormous, and impossible to compute accurately. This was the Asiatic Rotterdam, and equalled in brutality the worst crimes committed by the Nazis in Europe. The name of the miscreant primarily responsible for these outrages should be remembered. No Allied victory will be complete until he has been punished. He was Lieutenant-General Susumu Morioka.

Manila and the naval base of Cavite were occupied without resistance on 2 January 1942. Before the city was evacuated, many wounded American and Filipino soldiers were put on board ship and safely transferred to Australia. All military stores and everything else of use to the enemy in the city and the naval base had been destroyed. The explanation for the surrender of Manila to the Japanese, as given by the American Air Department in Washington, was as follows:

"The tactical situation in the vicinity of Manila necessitated a radical readjustment of the lines held by the American and Filipino troops, and a consolidation of the defence forces north of Manila. This manoeuvre was successfully accomplished in the face of strong enemy opposition. The consequent shortening of our lines necessarily uncovered the road to Manila, and made possible Japanese entrance into the city. As it had previously been declared an open city, no close defence within the environs of the city was possible. The loss of Manila, while serious, has not lessened resistance to the Japanese attacks."

The main body of General MacArthur's troops had withdrawn towards the Bataan Peninsula. On 20 December another Japanese expedition invaded the southern island of Mindanao, landing at Davao Bay. This invasion also cost the enemy some naval losses. American army bombers attacked another Japanese battleship, scoring three direct hits, and sank a Japanese destroyer. The main Asiatic fleet, under Admiral Thomas S. Hart, had by this time retired to Sourabaya. With his bases threatened, this was the only thing to be done. The only naval operations in which a vessel of the United States Navy was engaged during this period was the spirited defence by the U.S.S. *Heron*, a small seaplane tender, against air attack. She was bombed at sea by ten four-engined flying-boats and five twin-engined land planes. Forty-six large bombs were dropped, and three torpedoes launched against her. By very skilful handling her com-



manding officer, Lieutenant William Leverette Kabler, avoided destruction, and only sustained one direct bomb hit. He destroyed one of the flying-boats, badly damaged others, and managed to reach port. For this action Lieutenant Kabler was awarded the American Navy Cross and promoted Lieutenant-Commander. The Japanese General Staff, with the occupation of Manila and the successful landing at Mindanao, probably thought that serious resistance was now at an end. They were soon disillusioned. Throughout the islands Filipino irregular bands and Filipino and American soldiers cut off from their units, continued guerilla warfare against the Japanese lines of communication, attacking isolated Japanese positions, and killing small parties of the enemy or stragglers. One of General MacArthur's guerilla bands, operating in the Cagayan Valley, in northern Luzon, completely surprised the Japanese at an aerodrome at Tugegarao, which was seized by the enemy in the first fortnight of the war. At small loss to the attackers they killed 100 Japanese and put 300 others to flight.

By 3 January the enemy had moved his main forces in the island of Luzon round the northern shore of Manila Bay, ready for the assault on the Bataan Peninsula. The first heavy attack was launched on 4 January against General MacArthur's advanced positions in Pampanga. Here the Japanese suffered a heavy defeat, losing 700 killed. On 6 January the Japanese again attacked along the whole American and Filipino front, which was now based on the Bataan Peninsula. Their ground troops were supported by a considerable air force. This attack was repulsed, as was an even heavier attack on 10 January against General MacArthur's right flank. On 13 January two further assaults were made, and another on the 14th, all being repulsed with heavy losses, largely because of the accurate fire of the American artillery on the Bataan Peninsula. Further assaults on 17 and 19 January were equally unsuccessful, after which there was a lull while the Japanese brought up reinforcements. During all this time the troops in Mindanao, in the south, mostly Filipinos, were fiercely resisting an army by this time swollen to 100,000. The total invading force in Luzon had now grown to 200,000, and in the main assaults on the Bataan Peninsula six divisions of the best Japanese troops were identified, totalling approximately 90,000 men. One of the heaviest attacks was made on 24-25 January against General MacArthur's left flank. This looked at one time like being successful, but on the 25th the American troops on the extreme right made a strong counter-attack, and threw the whole Japanese army into confusion. On 29 January the enemy attacked both flanks, their infantry advancing in masses, but were accurately shelled and broken up by artillery fire. On 19 January the Japanese attempted a landing in Subig Bay, to the west of the Peninsula, and managed to get some troops ashore. In the process they lost a 5,000-ton transport, sunk by a motor torpedo-boat of the United States Asiatic fleet commanded by Lieutenant

John G. Bulkeley. This little warship was only 77 feet long, and had a crew of eight, including the young commander. Having failed in their frontal attacks from the land side, the enemy now tried surprise landings at various points along the thirty-mile-long western coast of the peninsula under cover of darkness. The first of these attempts was made on the night of 2 February, but was discovered by American night-fighter aeroplanes who attacked the convoy with light bombs and machine-gun fire. The enemy barges and other landing craft which escaped this attack were destroyed by artillery fire. All the landing barges were burnt or sunk, and none of the invaders reached the shore. In these operations a naval battalion of American seamen and marines evacuated from the naval base performed valiant services.

The next stratagem was to prepare an amphibian force at Ternate, on the other side of Manila Bay, opposite the island of Corregidor. Up till now the great naval guns of the fortress had not been in action, and it would appear that the Japanese espionage had failed them on this occasion and they were unaware of this heavy artillery. The fortress troops watched the preparations, including the assembly of the barges, launches, and other landing craft, at Ternate. They then watched the embarkation of the would-be landing party. When some thousands of Japanese troops were crowded into the landing craft the 16-inch guns opened fire. They had the range exactly, and the whole expedition was destroyed with heavy casualties to the enemy in men and material. Having disclosed their existence, the gunners on the island then turned their attention to the heavy siege batteries which the Japanese had been erecting in other parts of the Bay, and in a series of concentrated barrages destroyed eleven of them.

In the defence of the Bataan Peninsula, which will go down in history as one of the greatest military exploits of all times, and which has shed undying lustre on American and Filipino arms, General MacArthur was assisted by two American senior officers whose names will always stand high in the military history of their country. These were Major-General Jonathan M. Wainwright and Brigadier-General Albert M. Jones. The defence of the Bataan Peninsula shattered any illusions about the invincibility of the Japanese army and air force. It held up very large Japanese naval, military and air forces which could have been used to attack Sumatra or Java or other important positions held in the Allied cause. It gave time for the recovery of American naval strength after the disaster of Pearl Harbour, and for the re-grouping of British naval and air forces. It was the most serious setback to the Japanese strategical plan of rapid action and shock tactics.

On the other hand, the conquest of the Archipelago, even though incomplete and disputed, was a serious loss to the Allies. The numerous well-found airfields were now available for their enemies. The Cavite naval base had a useful repair plant and a slipway 196 feet long. A

much larger slipway at Manila, 1,200 feet long, was capable of taking large ships for repairs, and at Olongapo, near Manila, was a floating-dock capable of lifting cruisers. Though these naval establishments and equipment were destroyed as far as possible by the defending army before evacuation, and their use denied to the enemy, the loss was all the more painful and damaging to the Allies in view of the destruction of the naval base at Singapore. In addition to the naval losses suffered by the Japanese the confirmed destruction of their aeroplanes was 163 in the first three months of the fighting, that is, to 10 February 1942.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FALL OF SINGAPORE

IN a sentence, the reason why Singapore fell is that those responsible had prepared its defence for a set of circumstances which did not arise, and had not altered the defence arrangements to meet entirely new conditions. The underlying idea was that Singapore could only be attacked from the sea; and that although the Royal Navy might not have local command of the sea for a period, reinforcements could be sent in time to restore the position.

The most important of Singapore's defences were two batteries of 15-inch guns. Five of these great cannon had been installed in the island, three at the eastern extremity, near Changi, and two at the western extremity. These guns were capable of piercing the armour of the most powerful battleships, and covered the whole of the sea approaches to the Straits of Malacca and the Johore Channel for more than 25 miles in every direction. I went over the Changi battery in 1939 and admired the way the guns had been sunk in their pits with massive concrete defences. The machinery for operating them was far underground, and it would have been difficult to put the batteries out of action except by a direct hit by shell or bomb on the guns themselves. They denied the seaward approaches to the most powerful warships in the world. As soon as invading infantrymen had overborne the defending troops these great pieces of artillery were as useless as empty bottles. There was nothing left to do but destroy them and their intricate and costly machinery.

The establishment and preparation of the great naval base and arsenal was undertaken partly as a corollary to our refusal to renew the Anglo-Japanese Treaty, and partly because of the alarm and apprehension caused by continual reports of aggressive designs by the Japanese Government and of aggressive acts. Because it might be necessary to engage in war against the Japanese Empire the

Singapore base was extended, as already explained, from a minor and secondary naval port to a great establishment and first-class dock-yard. When this great expansion began Germany had ceased to count as a naval Power, and there was no other potential enemy in the West. Until 1934 and 1935, therefore, it was sound reasoning to suppose that if a strong fleet was not actually based on Singapore heavy naval reinforcements would be sent at short notice. If Europe had remained peaceful this state of affairs would have continued. The first danger signal was the seizure of power by Hitler and his Nazis in Germany. From the beginning their intentions were obvious to any unbiased person in possession of the known facts. The next danger signal was the failure of the great Disarmament Conference in 1932, the culminating point of a long and sustained effort to induce the principal Powers of the world to limit their armaments by mutual consent. The third danger signal, and the most important of all, was the denunciation by Japan in 1935 of the limitation of armaments clauses of the Treaty of Washington of 1921-22.

The trouble with Italy over Abyssinia and her consequent hostility, the tremendous increase in German armaments, the so-called Axis alliance between Germany and Italy, were all indications that a situation might arise in which Britain would have her hands full in the Mediterranean and Atlantic, and be unable to spare the necessary naval strength to keep control of the South China Sea and the approach to Singapore. The air enthusiasts hoped that long-range bombers and torpedo-bombers based on the Malayan aerodromes would be a substitute for sea power. They were probably right, except that although the aerodromes were built in profusion on Singapore island and the Malay Peninsula, neither the aeroplanes to use them nor the necessary garrisons to defend them were provided. True, from 1937 onwards, when the cancellation of the Washington Naval Treaty became effective, the British Admiralty, like the American Navy Office, were busily engaged in replacing their old battleships and practically doubling their existing fleets; but warships, especially of the largest type, take a long time to build. In the absence of an assured naval command, and air force control of the sea approaches to Singapore, it should have been plain that the fortress and naval base might have to withstand attack from the land side. Some preparations were made to meet this contingency, but they were based on the supposition that the enemy (in this case Japan) might effect landings on the east coast of the peninsula, and that such expeditions would not be in great numerical strength. What had not been foreseen was, firstly, the ability of the Japanese to engage in great overseas and amphibian operations, the most striking example of which was the invasion of the Philippines already described in a previous chapter; and, secondly, an enemy occupation of Indo-China, Thailand, and Malaya. When the occupation of French Indo-China by Japan became a fact in the summer of 1941, there was no further excuse for delaying the pre-

parations to resist a large scale attack from the land. Such preparations as were made were quite inadequate. Singapore was lost in two months of fighting by the overrunning of Malaya. The immediate causes were:

- (1) A wrongly conceived defence scheme;
- (2) The inadequate numbers of the defending troops in Malaya, which in turn led to
- (3) the loss of the Malayan aerodromes; and this, in turn, accentuated
- (4) the lack of sufficient defensive and offensive power in the air.

As an example of the failure to grasp the meaning of the new situation, there were no adequate defences to prevent the forcing of the Johore Channel in case an enemy succeeded in conquering the mainland. There should have been booms and other fixed obstructions ready to place in position and large numbers of small sea and land mines to prevent the passage of landing barges and the disembarkation of parties of invaders on the north and west shores of the island. These were elementary needs, which should have been provided almost automatically by the Army Council, as they would have been almost automatically demanded by the local defence leaders if the new state of affairs had been understood. The fatuous optimism of those responsible in London is almost past belief. When the Japanese had been steadily forcing their way down through the Malayan isthmus for nearly three weeks without any serious check to their progress, Mr. Winston Churchill, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, stated in Ottawa at his Press conference the apparently unhesitating belief that Singapore would be held. The actual words used by him as telegraphed back by the news agencies and reported in the *London Times*, were:

"He expressed in unequivocal terms confidence that Singapore could be held against Japanese attacks."

It is amazing to find how badly misinformed was the man responsible for managing the entire strategy of the war.

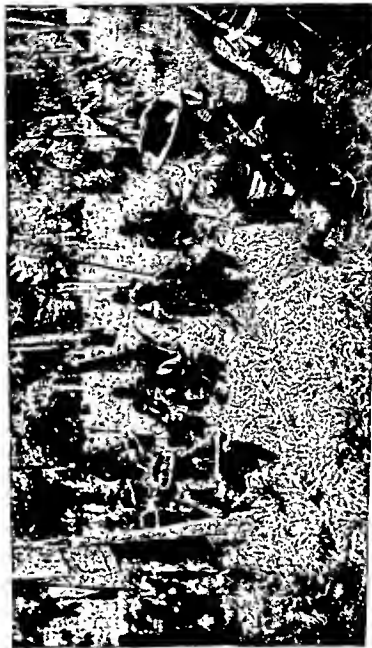
Poor Brooke-Popham was publicly called a 'nincompoop' in this country, and assailed in the Australian newspapers for saying far less than this.

Who was to blame for this lamentable state of affairs? Some share rests on the shoulders of the permanent officials of the Colonial Office and their nominees and representatives in Malaya. Part of the blame certainly rests on the Committee of Imperial Defence which, under the chairmanship of successive Prime Ministers, was responsible up till the outbreak of war in September 1939, for advising the Cabinet of the day and the Dominion Cabinets on strategical questions of this nature. On this committee sat the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, representing the army, and the chiefs of the air and naval staffs.



ENL.

MALAYA: JUNGLE COUNTRY



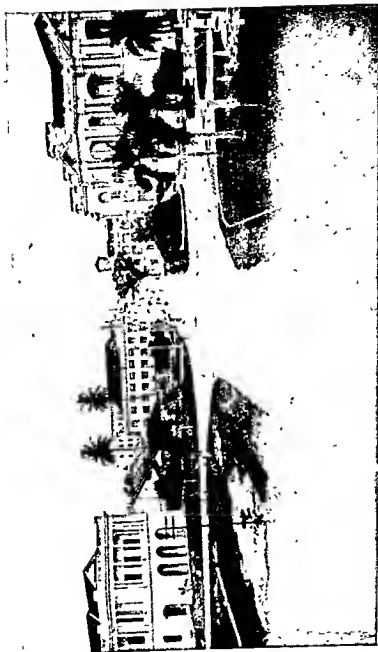
SOLDIERS OF THE NINTH GURKHAS

*Duppa*



Arzon River and Forest, Mexico





Ipoh, MALAYA

With them sat the Colonial and Dominion Ministers and representatives of the Dominions when considered desirable. Under our theory of constitutional government the Cabinet in office accepts collective responsibility for the defence of the British Commonwealth and the safety of the Realm. Prime Ministers MacDonald, Baldwin, Chamberlain and Churchill, who presided over the Cabinet and the Committee of Imperial Defence<sup>1</sup> during this period were all busy men, borne down by the weight of their duties and responsibilities even in peace time. Mr. MacDonald, for example, was more interested in nominating bishops and deans than in Imperial strategy. Singapore and Malaya were in the other hemisphere, and these gentlemen all had much more pressing duties in peace, and certainly in war, to distract them. I am inclined, therefore, to put the chief share of the blame on the various politicians who occupied the position of Colonial Minister during this period. They could always have had such matters raised in the Cabinet, they could at any time have demanded the calling together of the Committee of Imperial Defence, and I consider they had the chief responsibility. The War Office, the Admiralty and the Air Ministry could always shift the blame to each other; but the Colonial Secretary of the day was responsible to the King, and, through His Majesty, to the British people, including our fellow-citizens in the Pacific, whatever the colour of their skins.

To come to the actual course of events: the island of Singapore enjoyed only a week's respite after the withdrawal of the defending army from the mainland. Such naval forces as were available, and they were few, for our most valuable ships had been withdrawn to Sourabaya in Java, were occupied in evacuating considerable numbers of British troops from the mainland, some of them stragglers, but including one large body isolated at Batu Pahat, on the west coast of Johore, sixty miles from Singapore. Two thousand soldiers were evacuated from this area alone in a miniature Dunkirk operation. Owing to the shallow nature of the coast, only small craft could approach close inshore. All the available fishing-boats, sampans, motor-boats, launches and other small craft were collected and towed by tugs or men-of-war under cover of darkness to the point of embarkation. While the warships lay off shore, the naval officers, ratings, native boatmen and fishermen rowed the small rescue craft into the creeks and inlets among the mangrove swamps, picked up their human cargoes, usually with their weapons, and took them out to the larger vessels in the offing. This manoeuvre was repeated again and again until the last soldier who could be found had been rescued. The Japanese apparently did not suspect what was going on, and the rescuing craft were neither fired on nor bombed from the air, and not a single casualty was suffered. While the defenders of the island were hurriedly strengthening the defences along the Singapore shore of the

<sup>1</sup> The Committee of Imperial Defence was replaced by a Defence Committee on the outbreak of war with Germany. This Defence Committee was presided over by Mr. Churchill.

Johore Strait, the enemy were not idle. Japanese aircraft operating in Borneo, Burma—and even the Philippines—were withdrawn and concentrated in Malaya, thus greatly strengthening the already heavy air forces at the disposal of the Japanese commander in the field, Lieutenant-General Tomoyuki Yamashita. Armoured landing barges were railed from Bangkok to Penang and Port Swettenham, and then taken down the west coast of the peninsula for the assault. That these landing barges were ready is one more proof of the careful and long prepared arrangements for the campaign by the Japanese General Staff. Some of these motor landing barges had been used in the operations against the Chinese in southern China, and were probably at Canton, but others were probably brought from Japan. This must have taken months to prepare. By rail also the Japanese brought up long-range artillery, and when the grand assault opened on 7 February 1942 shells were thrown into the outskirts of Singapore City at a range of over twelve miles. On 4 and 5 February the Japanese made a feint at landing on the island of Pulau Ubin, which divides the eastern entrance to the Johore Strait. This island is completely commanded by the eastern battery of heavy guns mounted on Singapore island for the defence of the Strait and the naval base. Large numbers of field guns and mortars were brought up and mounted on the Johore coast west of the Causeway. On the night of 7 February a terrific barrage was laid down on the defending positions of the troops holding the coast of Singapore island west of the Causeway, putting most of their searchlights out of action. Between the hours of darkness and 1 a.m., when the moon rose, strong bodies of Japanese troops in armoured landing barges and also in all manner of small craft collected for the purpose, crossed the mile-wide strait under cover of the barrage, and forced their way ashore. The coast here is swampy, covered with mangrove trees six or seven feet high, and intersected by numerous creeks. The defenders, mostly Australian troops, were forced back by sheer weight of numbers to the firmer ground further inland, where the swamps give way to rubber plantations and agricultural land. Lieutenant-General A. E. Percival, commanding the garrison, rushed up reinforcements of Australian, British and Indian troops, and counter-attacked at daylight before the enemy could establish themselves. Under the conditions of former wars, the enemy landing parties would now be in a difficult position. With the coming of daylight their reinforcements could not have forced the Johore Strait, which was commanded by our artillery. By all the old rules the invaders should have been overwhelmed and pushed back into the sea; but with the first light of dawn the Japanese air squadrons arrived in swarms. Hundreds of dive-bombers swooped down on the advancing British, Australian and Indian forces, or on those already occupying the inshore advanced positions, dropping their bombs and then zooming up with their rear-gunners spattering the ground with machine-gun bullets. High overhead, formations of ordinary bombers

made high-level attacks, and the strain on the defending troops soon became almost unbearable. Toll was taken of the Japanese planes by the anti-aircraft batteries and by the few British Hurricane fighters available; but the British Air Force was hopelessly outnumbered. During the second day of the assault only six Hurricanes were available for the defence. The situation was worse than in Crete, because the attackers were operating from nearby aerodromes. As soon as the Japanese bombers and dive-bombers had discharged their loads, they could fly back to the various airfields in their possession in Malaya, fill up their bomb racks, refuel, and return to the attack.<sup>1</sup>

The next night the enemy landed tanks, and by 10 February they had reached the railway line from Singapore city to the Causeway, at the village of Bukit Panjang. They also cut off and captured the Tenge aerodrome in the west of the island. As soon as the attackers reached the Singapore end of the Causeway and established themselves there it was not very difficult for their engineers to throw a pontoon bridge across the gap blown in the Causeway and to do this work under cover of darkness. The garrison set the great naval oil tanks on fire, and the dense clouds of smoke rolling across the sky from the burning petroleum gave further help to the attackers. The Japanese aircraft were able to take cover in these great smoke clouds from our anti-aircraft fire and the attention of our few fighter aeroplanes. By this time the evacuation of women and children from Singapore city was in full swing. It had been going on intermittently for some weeks, but now all available British and Dutch naval vessels were concentrated on taking these non-combatants out of harm's way. During the week preceding the assault on Singapore island, and even while it was in progress, hastily raised units of Chinese recruits were being taught the rudiments of infantry drill and musketry and sent off to reinforce the defenders. The enthusiasm, fearlessness and fortitude of the 500,000 Chinese inhabitants of Singapore island was creditable to the highest degree.

When British fortunes were at their lowest ebb these Asiatics, not all of them nominally British subjects, stood by us in loyalty and comradeship. Young Chinese girls acted as nurses in dressing-stations, the older Chinese men served as fire watchers, A.R.P. wardens and fire-fighters, and in the rescue squads they set an example to every other section of the community; and every able-bodied man, trained or untrained, volunteered to serve in the front line. What an army we could have raised from these half-million Chinese in Singapore Island during the two and a quarter years since the outbreak of war in Europe, or even during the six months after the Japanese seizure of Indo-China; and what an army we could have raised from the 2,600,000 Chinese in Malaya and also from the 100,000 Sikhs and Pathans and other Indians of the fighting races resident in the Penin-

<sup>1</sup> From first to last 200 Royal Air Force fighter aeroplanes, including American machines were used in the campaign. Of these, 51 were Hurricanes.

sula or on the island! The European population did their duty. Every man who could serve, and most of the younger ones had already gone off to the wars, performed some service; but, after all, it was our campaign. Only a fortnight or so before the invading army swept south across Johore Strait the Chinese and other Asiatic residents had been treated as children or, worse, as non-combatants; for the children fight in Russia, and would do so in this country if we were assailed. On the second day of the assault Japanese aeroplanes scattered leaflets as well as bombs on the island. Thousands of them were dropped bearing the facsimile of a signature of the Japanese Commander-in-Chief. There was certainly an improvement in the English of this pamphlet from the crude propaganda efforts in the earlier leaflets during the Malayan campaign. The wording of the leaflet calling the British forces to surrender was as follows:

"I advise the immediate surrender of the British forces in Singapore from the standpoint of 'bushido', or Japanese chivalry. The Japanese army and navy forces have already conquered the Malayan Peninsula, annihilated the British fleet in the Far East, and acquired complete control of the sea and air in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, as well as in south-western Asia. In view of the fact that Singapore has been an important British base since the eighteenth century, as well as the melting-pot of eastern and western civilization, the Japanese forces desire to refrain from seeing the city reduced to ashes. Japan has taken up arms in order to conquer injustice and restore justice, without the least intention of exploiting or invading foreign soil.

"The Japanese forces, fighting on the basis of this principle, will crush all enemies who oppose the Japanese action, but will extend a warm, helping hand to civilians as well as those who surrender.

"I wish to take this occasion to urge the immediate surrender of you, British officers and men, whose wives and children must be anxiously waiting for the return home of their husbands and fathers, thereby saving also innocent and peace-loving civilians in Singapore from the disasters of war.

"I expect you, officers and men of the British forces, will accept my advice for peace from the standpoint of the traditional honour of the British Empire. Upon surrender you will be treated as soldiers and comrades in arms.

"TOMOYUKI YAMASHITA,

"Commander-in-Chief, Malaya."

For examples of Japanese 'bushido', see the accounts of the abominable outrages by their soldiers and by the deliberate order of the High Command committed in the Philippines, described in the last chapter.

The Chinese had endured four years of Japanese 'bushido', during

which at least 5,000,000 civilians, men, women and children, had been slaughtered by the 'Knights of Nippon'.

The rich, gay, pleasant city of Singapore had suffered from a succession of air raids ever since the outbreak of the war in the Pacific. The ground is swampy under the surface, and the construction of shelters is difficult. Most of the houses, and especially the native houses, were lightly constructed, as is the custom in the tropics. The death-roll was appalling, the destruction hideous.

On 11 February 1942 the Government of the Colony of Singapore issued a *pronunciamento*. It was stated that the authorities intended to build, the cost coming from public funds, air raid shelters for the civil population near the markets and food shops and in the congested areas. This was nine weeks after the first bombs had fallen on Singapore, and when the enemy was fighting in the outskirts of the city. Sir Shenton Thomas's efforts to speed up the governmental machinery were not very successful. Apart from natural fright, the crowded population behaved well. They were buoyed up in the belief that help would surely reach the hard-pressed colony. As described in an earlier chapter, large convoys did arrive, and included in their cargo were some welcome Hurricane fighters. Unfortunately, not enough experienced pilots were sent with them.

The British, Australian and New Zealand pilots already in the command had to learn to fly machines they had never taken into the air before in face of the enemy. They rose to the occasion. In the first day of the assault three Japanese bombers were destroyed, three probably destroyed, and thirteen damaged. Two enemy bombers were also shot down by the anti-aircraft batteries. Eight other troop convoys arrived before the surrender. From the beginning of operations seventy-three Japanese aircraft were definitely destroyed, and twenty-seven probably destroyed by the Singapore defences. A few British tanks also arrived in one of the last convoys. They prolonged the defence, but were otherwise too late to affect the main issue. It is curious that more help was not sent during the two months interval. The voyage from Britain round the Cape of Good Hope or from the west coast of the United States was a long run, but the sea passage from India was far shorter. The Indian command was naturally exercised over the threat to Burma, and the actual Japanese invasion of the eastern marches. So important was it, however, to deny the use of the Straits of Malacca to Japanese shipping and vessels of war that the defence of Malaya might have been given a higher priority. The destruction of the naval base led to an outcry in America that this loss would prolong the war for another year. American troops and munitions could have been rushed to Malaya in time to take part in the defence. The Singapore base had to be defended on the mainland, not on the island.

No criticism can fairly be levelled at the Federal Government of Australia, for the Commonwealth was under the threat of invasion,

and many well-equipped Australian units were already serving in far-distant theatres of war, including Malaya. Yet it is doubtful if the island could have been held without much stronger air defences. Once the Malayan airfields were lost and the Singapore aerodromes under long-range artillery fire, it was difficult to provide this, except from Sumatra. There the country is mountainous, and much of it heavily wooded and the aerodromes comparatively few. There were enough landing grounds, nevertheless; but to provide the required air defences against the immensely strong forces brought into action by the Japanese a long prepared and carefully thought out plan was required. *Ad hoc* strategy, the strategy of Mr. Micawber, always waiting for something to turn up, the brilliant improvisation of meeting situations which should have been long foreseen but which apparently came as a complete surprise, will usually be defeated by the long prepared, carefully planned strategy of such masters of staff work as the Japanese High Command.

Mr. Churchill seems to have been as misinformed about the real situation in Malaya and Singapore as he was about the situation in North Africa when the second British offensive was launched against the German and Italian army under General Rommel. His appreciation of both military situations was as much at fault as his prophecies about the Norwegian campaign eighteen months earlier, when, as First Lord of the Admiralty, he said: "It is the considered view of the Admiralty that we have greatly gained by what has occurred in Scandinavia and in northern waters in a strategic and military sense."

Later, he promised the House of Commons that all the German transports would be sunk whilst crossing the Skaggerak on their way to Norway.

As already noted, neither Japanese soldiers nor Japanese airmen are specially courageous or skilful. The élite of their fighting men are good warriors; but most of the tales of Japanese heroism and fanaticism are legendary. Their strength lies in a system under which their operations are conducted and their strategy defined by men who devote the whole of their lives to the study of war in all its branches. In other words, the Japanese Empire in practice is ruled by its General Staff, and the members of the Japanese General Staff think of nothing but war and preparations for war. The democracies leave such matters to amateurs who are not always brilliant amateurs.

On the third day of the Japanese grand assault on Singapore island, when, with heavy air superiority, they were pressing back the gallant defenders by sheer weight of numbers and metal, a so-called Pacific War Council met for the first time in London under the chairmanship of Mr. Winston Churchill. It consisted of the representatives in London of the Australian, New Zealand and Dutch Governments, Colonel the Rt. Hon. L. S. Amery, M.P., Secretary of State for India, and a galaxy of senior British staff officers. The United States of

America, Canada and China, all intimately concerned in the Pacific war, were not represented. After two months of uninterrupted Japanese successes this makeshift committee held its initial session. One explanation is that it was a determined attempt to keep control of Pacific strategy in London and in the already over-full hands of Mr. Churchill. The real control of Pacific strategy was, and is, in Washington, where the three American Chiefs of Staff and their British counterparts, under the leadership of Field Marshal Sir John Dill, collaborated with Mr. Nash, the former Finance Minister of New Zealand, Dutch, Australian and Chinese representatives. The London Council only interposed one more cause of delay and indecision. The official explanation of the working of this extraordinary arrangement was that General Wavell, with a Dutch admiral and a high American air force officer on his staff, was in command from Malaya to the coasts of Australia. Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific Islands and the west coast of North America were under American command, and India and Burma under the Commander-in-Chief in India. General Wavell's command, therefore, as regards major strategy or political decisions, was a kind of No Man's Land between London and Washington. If General Wavell had a proposal to make affecting more than one of the Allied nations he would send it in duplicate, one copy going to Washington and the other copy going to London. The staffs in London and Washington would then get into communication with each other and exchange notes. When they had reached a common conclusion, their recommendations would come before the High Command in Washington and the Pacific War Council in London. If agreement was then reached, General Wavell would be informed and allowed to take the necessary action! Despite modern means of communication, any scheme more likely to produce delays and confusion would be difficult to conceive. The vital decisions in this great campaign in the Pacific could have been taken either in London or in Washington by competent bodies sitting in either capital. The actual arrangement could not have been better conceived to produce the maximum of delay and inefficiency. General Wavell and his naval and air collaborators must have wished that the cable and wireless communications were cut for an indefinite period.

The approach of the Japanese attackers near enough to the reservoirs in the centre of the island to interfere with the supply of water to the city sealed the fate of Singapore. It had been hoped to hold a line of defence from west of the naval base, the reservoirs and the racecourse, to Bukit Timah and Jurong down to the coast on the south of the island at Pasir Panjang. If this line could have been held, the invaders would have been kept to about seven miles north-west and five miles west of the suburbs of the city. Many of the permanent batteries for the defence of the island against sea attack had been traversed round so as to fire on the Johore Strait and the Causeway, and the defenders were fairly well supplied with other



artillery. The enemy, however, managed to reinforce their troops on the mainland and to maintain heavy pressure both by day and by night. The British fighter aeroplanes, including the Hurricanes, available to assist the garrison, could only remain intermittently over the field of battle owing to the distance away of their aerodromes in Sumatra and their limited fuel supply. At half-past seven on the morning of 11 February a Japanese note was dropped from the air addressed to the British Commander-in-Chief demanding the unconditional surrender of the forces under his command. No reply was made. By the 13th, shelling and bombing of the city was so severe that the numerous fires were getting out of control. Within a three-mile radius 1,000,000 inhabitants, mostly civilians, were crowded, and on this day the Japanese penetrated to the MacRitchie reservoir. At nine o'clock on the previous night the citizens who cared to tune in their wireless sets, heard the following message from Lord Moyne, Secretary of State for the Colonies, speaking from a studio in London:

"I want to send this message to the people of Malaya, men, women and children of many races—Malays, Chinese, and British from all parts of the Empire—in this hour of stern ordeal. Be assured that you are constantly in our thoughts. Whether you serve in the armed forces or in civil defence—whether you are fighting the flames or helping the wounded—all the world is watching your courage and endurance. Savage attack has shattered the peace which you have enjoyed for many generations, and has destroyed the fruits of your industry. The struggle is bitter, but there is ranged on our side the whole might of the British Empire and her powerful allies. Such a struggle must end in our final victory. In spite of grievous reverses, we shall break the enemy's power and restore to you your freedom of life."

In an attempt to restore a desperate situation, the British, Indian and Malayan forces, with the aid of their few tanks, launched a series of desperate counter-attacks and made some progress. The ground could not be held, however, and by the next day it had become only too plain that resistance could not be much further prolonged. The Imperial troops were, during these days, resisting with great stubbornness and bravery, and making the invaders pay with heavy casualties for every yard they advanced. No doubt the fighting in the suburbs and streets might have been continued for some time, but there was a growing shortage of water, petrol and ammunition. Owing to fires amongst warehouses, and general disorganization, there was also anxiety about the food supply.

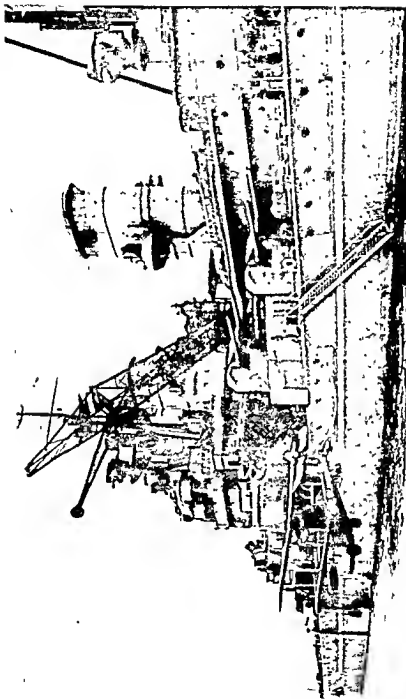
The next morning a British flag of truce was sent to the Japanese lines, and negotiations opened for capitulation. At 2.30 p.m. on that day the terms of surrender, which were practically unconditional, were signed between General Percival and the Japanese Commander-in-Chief, General Yamashita, at Bukit Timah. The units of the



Victoria Point, Borneo



TAIPING, IN PERAK, MALAYA



*Photographic News Agency*

H.M.S. "PRINCEL OF WALLIS"



ADMIRAL SIR TOM PHILLIPS

British and Imperial troops engaged in the Malayan campaign and the defence of Singapore island included the following:

- (i) 18th British Division, comprising 53rd, 54th and 55th Infantry Brigades. This included battalions of the following Infantry Regiments: Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, the Royal Norfolk Regiment, Cambridgeshire Regiment, Suffolk Regiment, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment, Sherwood Foresters.
- (ii) 8th Australian Division of 22nd and 27th A.I.F. Brigades.
- (iii) 9th and 11th Indian Divisions, which contained battalions of the following British regiments: East Surrey Regiment, Leicestershire Regiment, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, as well as battalions of the following Indian regiments: Punjab Regiment, Jat Regiment, Rajputana Rifles, Royal Garwhal Rifles, Dogra Regiment, Baluch Regiment, Hyderabad Regiment, Sikh Regiment, Frontier Force Regiment, Frontier Force Rifles, Gurkha Rifles, and battalions of Indian State Forces.
- (iv) 1st and 2nd Malay Infantry Brigades, containing battalions of the following British regiments as well as Indian and Malayan battalions: The Loyal Regiment, the Gordon Highlanders, the Manchester Regiment.

Besides the artillery regiments included in the above field formations, there were a number of coast artillery units, anti-aircraft regiments, anti-tank regiments and searchlight units. In addition to the engineer units there were a number of fortress companies and army troops companies. There were also units of the Royal Corps of Signals, Royal Army Medical Corps, Ordnance Corps, Pay Corps, Indian Medical Services and army nursing personnel.

There has been some criticism because the majority of the women and children evacuated by sea were Europeans. On the other hand, the Japanese were by this time pursuing a deliberate policy of heaping humiliations and insults upon Europeans, and making an outward show, at any rate at this stage, of treating the Asiatics with humanity. The British in the East, and also the Dutch, have ruled over vast territories largely because of their prestige. Thus, an army of 60,000 British troops in India with its population of 389,000,000 would have an impossible task except with the consent of the majority of the governed, and this consent is based on European prestige. The treatment of captured European women was brutal and degrading in the extreme, as part of this deliberate policy. Captured American soldiers in North China were made to pull rickshaws in the streets of Shanghai. This treatment was part of the political warfare waged by the Japanese, and it is interesting to note that in Manila, where similar humiliations were heaped on Europeans, no exception was made of German and Italian nationals. There has also been comment because Singapore

remained gay to the end. The leading hotels still ran their tea and dinner dances, and the cinemas and other places of entertainment did good business. Here, surely, there was something to admire. With a cruel and unscrupulous enemy at the gate, few could have had any illusions about his success or their own fate, and yet these poor people kept cheerful to the end. It was rather like the dignity and gaiety of the French aristocrats waiting for the tumbrils and execution during the revolution. That revolution swept away an order, and the Pacific War swept away another order a century and a half later.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE ATTACK ON THE DUTCH EAST INDIES

THE Dutch Empire in Asia is the third most populous and the second in order of economic importance and wealth of the European Colonial systems.

The group of islands stretching from Sumatra in the west to the island of Timor in the east, half of which is under Portuguese rule form a chain or bridge between Asia and Northern Australia. Only the Straits of Malacca to the west and the Timor Sea to the east provide safe passage for large vessels between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The Sunda Strait between Sumatra and Java and the other sea passages between the smaller islands to the east of Java are intricate and difficult of navigation, and could be closed by minefields in time of war. The strategical importance of this chain of islands is obvious: To the north is another chain, stretching from Borneo, three-quarters of which is under Dutch rule, and which is the third largest island in the world, after Greenland and New Guinea, to New Guinea itself, where the western half is again under Dutch rule. To illustrate the immense area covered by these two chains of islands, if their chart be superimposed on a map of Europe and the Middle East, they would stretch from the west coast of Ireland to the borders of Persia. The island of Sumatra is as large as Germany in area, and Java is as large as England.

The total population of the Dutch East Indies is approximately 70,000,000, of whom 40,000,000 are settled in the closely cultivated and thickly populated island of Java, where is the seat of government, Batavia, and the principal Dutch naval base, Sourabaya; 250,000 of these inhabitants are European, mostly Dutchmen. The Japanese formed a small minority, numbering some 7,000, most of them in Borneo and New Guinea. The Dutch made a great success of this vast domain. They supplied the administration and most of the defence forces, the Chinese had in their hands most of the trade and

commerce, and the native inhabitants of the Malayan race are the agriculturists and labourers.

The Dutch have ruled and colonized this Pacific Empire for nearly three and a half centuries. There has been considerable inter-marriage with the Indoneses, especially in the earlier period. The Eurasians, in large numbers, are treated on an equality, and there is little trace of a 'colour bar'. Practically all Dutchmen in the East Indies, or Dutch India as they call it, speak Malay and the other native languages. The natives have been allowed to lead their own lives in their own ways with the minimum of interference. Bali, for example, which until comparatively recently was almost unknown outside the East Indies, is noteworthy for the Hindu religion and culture of its indigenous population. They were converted by Hindu missionaries, many centuries ago, and have developed native arts and crafts of a high order. A handful of Dutch officials administered this wonderful island with its magnificent Indoneses population with the greatest success. Most of the inhabitants of Java are Moslems. The Javanese are not a fighting race, and of uncertain quality as soldiers. The best troops come from the small island of Amboina, where was the secondary naval base, and the Celebes. The natural wealth of these islands was enormous, and had been successfully exploited before the outbreak of the Pacific war. Important oilfields and tropical products of all kinds, including rubber, edible oils and rice, brought great wealth and prosperity, in which all shared. Borneo and New Guinea were less developed, and considerable areas of both these islands had not even been explored. It was known that gold and coal existed in considerable quantities in both these larger islands and the gold mines had been successfully developed. In Borneo it was known also that there were rich deposits of many metals, including antimony, iron, tin, quicksilver and zinc.

I revisited what may be called the southern chain of islands in the spring of 1939, stopping in Timor, the beautiful and practically unspoilt islands of Bali, Java and Sumatra. I was particularly impressed by the cleanliness, good order and peace of these colonies.

Great attention was paid to education and sanitation, there were good roads everywhere, and, despite the tropical climate, the Dutch seem to have retained their energy. The average temperature which varies little, is between 75 and 90 degrees, and the hill stations in the mountains are cool and pleasant.

The principal towns are spread out, with attractive gardens, and the people have a pleasant habit of leaving everything open in their houses at night. To drive through the residential districts of an East Indian town after dark is a pleasure because of this custom. The interior of every house is open to view and the practice is to use large, brightly painted lampshades in all the principal rooms. There the European or Europeanized families are sitting, and it is a colourful and attractive sight. It is sad to think that the black-out under the



threat of Japanese raiding put a stop to this pleasant way of life. Literally, as well as figuratively, the lamps of civilization have been put out.

As already described, the Japanese had for long cast greedy eyes



on these fertile and wealthy regions which contained the raw materials, and especially the petroleum, which they needed. This the Dutch knew very well and had made what preparations were possible for their defence. Three modern light cruisers, a flotilla of destroyers, and some twelve submarines constituted the naval squadron, and this was obviously insufficient. The Dutch had good reason to rely on British and American naval help if attacked, but after the outbreak of war

in Europe in September 1939, the Netherlands Parliament authorized the construction of three battleships of 27,000 tons each. The German invasion of the Low Countries put a stop to this programme. Great attention was paid to the Air Force. Throughout the islands numerous aerodromes were constructed, many of them in secret, and altogether at the outbreak of war there were some five hundred landing-places. Great efforts had been made to increase the army. Every Dutchman was liable for service and the native inhabitants were recruited as rapidly as possible. The bullying and pressure on the government in Batavia by Japan has already been described, and when the United States and Britain were attacked the Dutch Government immediately declared war. The strategical plan of the Dutch High Command—and it was the only one they could adopt—was to hold the outlying possessions with light garrisons with orders to delay Japan's invasion long enough to destroy the oilfields and other prizes. Amboina was more strongly held because of the importance of its naval base, and the garrison there was strengthened with Australian troops. Dutch submarines, as already described, were sent to help in the defence of Malaya and did excellent service. The main defensive position was the island of Java, with its immense population, its seat of government, and its good naval base, dockyard and arsenal.

The scorched earth policy was applied by the Dutch with the utmost vigour and ruthlessness. It has been calculated that during the first two months of the fighting, property valued at £250,000,000 sterling was destroyed. For example, at the oil shipping port of Balikpapan, where there were large storage tanks and refineries, £18,000,000 worth of property was destroyed. How necessary this was is shown by the direction of the first Japanese attacks on the East Indies. I have already described the simultaneous assaults on Hongkong, Malaya and the Philippines, the object of which was the capture or immobilization of the Allied bases. Before the Dutch naval bases at Amboina and Sourabaya in Java could be attacked, it was necessary for the Japanese to secure jumping-off places in the Philippines, Borneo and the Celebes. Yet the first actual landing was made at Miri, in the small State of Sarawak, under British protection. Here there is an important oilfield, producing some of the finest crude aviation spirit in the world. The total output was in the neighbourhood of 1,000,000 tons a year. There were only slight local defences, but the local government, like the Dutch authorities, had time to put into operation a long-prepared plan of destruction. All the oil in storage was burnt, and the wells destroyed, with all their equipment, together with port installations and machinery. Landings were made at Miri and in British North Borneo on 14 and 15 December. On 15 December the Dutch naval port of Amboina was bombed. In the first Borneo landings, after such resistance as could be offered, the small local force retired into the interior and made their way through the jungles and over the mountains into Dutch territory. The invaders suffered damage. A Dutch

naval air squadron scored a direct hit on one of the Japanese cruisers and the transports were bombed. The Dutch airmen suffered no losses. When last seen the warship was heavily on fire. Apart from sporadic bombing attacks, often on undefended towns and villages of no military importance, no major operations were developed against the Dutch possessions for nearly a month.

In a broadcast on 22 December from Batavia, Lieut.-General H. ter Poorten, Commander-in-Chief Dutch East Indies, said

"The army are now prepared to defend the Netherlands East Indies with all the means at our disposal against an enemy who is as barbaric as he is unreliable and dishonourable. We have been able to prepare ourselves a long time, and we all feel a certain relief that we are now able to go into action. We have everything to fight for—our honour, our freedom, our home, our happiness, and all that makes life worth living. We are face to face with an enemy who is the equal in every way of his barbaric tutors who guide and direct him. We shall remain free, we shall hold out. Together we shall hold high the honour of the Netherlands East Indies. Long live the Queen."

The first Japanese landing on Dutch soil was on the night of 10 and 11 January 1942, and here the objective was the same as the attack on Miri, namely the oilfields on the island of Tarakan, off the north-east coast of Borneo. Because of its economic importance, this place had a fairly strong garrison which put up a fierce resistance. Help was also sent in the shape of bombers of the Netherlands East Indies Air Force. Two direct hits were scored on enemy troopships, and the Dutch pilots shot down three enemy aeroplanes. On 11 January Minahassa, in the north of the Celebes, was attacked. Here parachute troops were used in large numbers. The general attack was preceded by heavy air raids on the aerodromes and landing-places. The conquest of the Minahassa peninsula took the Japanese a fortnight, and was only partially completed on 21 January. On 15 January Amboina naval and air base was bombed for the second time, and on the same day the aerodrome at Medan, on the east coast of Sumatra, opposite British Malaya, suffered an air raid. These two places are 2,200 miles apart.

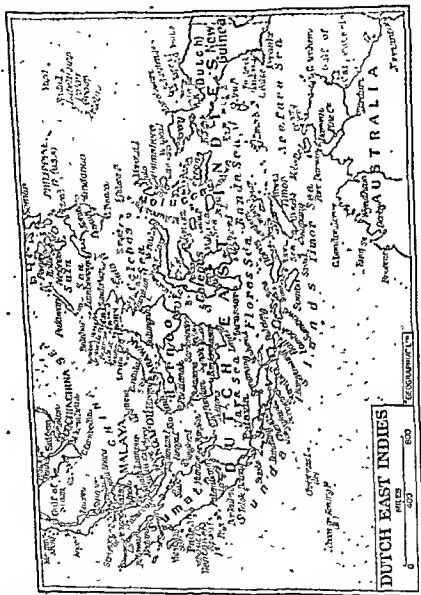
These and other raids were undertaken by the enemy with the object of paralysing the Dutch naval and air forces. They did not succeed. Between 13 December and 16 January Dutch submarines and naval and military aircraft attacked Japanese troopships and their escorting vessels of war wherever they could be located. These Japanese expeditions were attacked off Malaya, the Philippines, Borneo and the Celebes. Including the damage done by the Dutch coastal batteries at Tarakan the Japanese had now suffered the following losses:

Sunk: 2 cruisers, 4 destroyers, 11 transports, 3 tankers, 1 supply ship, 2 invasion barges.

Badly damaged: 3 cruisers, 5 transports, 1 aircraft-carrier.

These were losses inflicted by the Dutch, and additional to Japanese shipping and naval losses off Malaya and the Philippines.

The enemy were cheated of their hoped-for booty in petroleum in Borneo and the Celebes, but they continued to push their way south.



Their task was not easy. The Japanese were fighting on many fronts. Air raids were made on Hanoi airfield by Chinese and United States aircraft on 22 and 24 January. They met with no opposition. These Allied aircraft raided Bangkok on 24 and 28 January without loss to themselves. On 25 January it was learnt that Chinese reinforcements had been pouring into Burma during the past few weeks, and were still arriving.

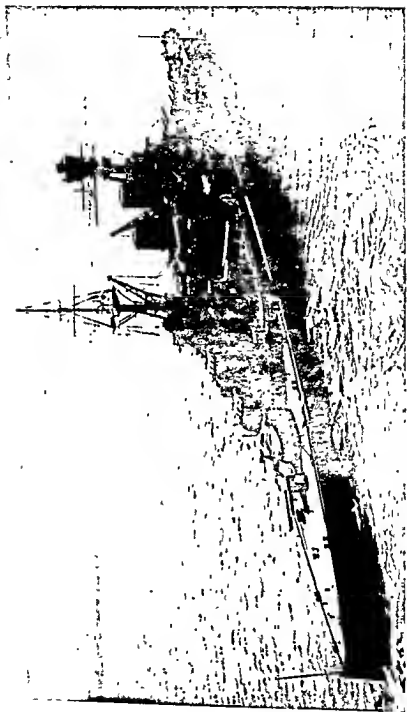
In the Dutch East Indies and New Guinea the successive stages of Japanese penetration were:

21 January 1942	Occupation of Minahassa Peninsula.
23 January 1942	" " Rabaul and Kavieng (New Ireland).
25 January 1942	" " Lae (the capital of New Guinea).
	" " Kendari (Celebes).
	" " Balikpapan (Borneo).
31 January 1942	" " Amboina:
1 February 1942	" " Samban and Pontianak (West Borneo).

Throughout this period, Japanese air raids were made on Belewian Padang and Sibolga (Sumatra), Sabang, Kavieng and Salamua (New Guinea), Lorungan (Manus Island, Admiralty Group), Tulagi (Solomon Isles), Samarinda and Pontianak (Borneo), Ternate (Moluccas), Amboina, Macassar, and Parepare (Celebes), and on a large number of other places in the outlying islands of the Archipelago.

During this stage of the campaign, the Japanese suffered two severe setbacks in addition to the losses already mentioned. The first was the concentrated attack by Dutch and American aircraft and Dutch and American warships on a very large Japanese convoy proceeding south through the Macassar Straits between the islands of Borneo and Celebes. The three-day-and-night battle raged between 23 and 26 January. It delayed the planned Japanese large-scale invasion on the key island of Java by at least a fortnight. The other Japanese setback was the heavy series of attacks by the American Navy on their advanced bases in the Marshall and Gilbert Islands on 31 January and 1 February.

The convoy so heavily attacked in the Macassar Straits consisted of about a hundred vessels, including warships. In the three days fighting forty-two of these were sunk or damaged. Dutch aircraft began the action in the afternoon of 23 January, when they scored a total of twelve direct hits with heavy and medium calibre bombs on eight Japanese ships. All were left burning. On the next day the attack was resumed by Dutch and American aircraft and by American naval forces, the latter consisting of cruisers and destroyers. A squadron of Flying Fortresses of the United States army air force played a great part in these operations. They were attacked by twelve enemy fighters and shot down five of them without the loss of one American plane. A Dutch aircraft shot down three enemy aircraft and damaged two. On the third day Dutch bombers scored four direct hits with 660-pound bombs on two cruisers and a transport. The Japanese brought up an aircraft-carrier to assist the defence with its aeroplanes. Fortunately, an American submarine was correctly placed to counter this move, and scored two hits with torpedoes. It is not, however, certain whether this ship was actually sunk. A Dutch submarine torpedoed a Japanese cruiser, the fate of which is also uncertain, and sank a Japanese destroyer. In the three days and nights of fighting the American cruisers and destroyers sank seven transports and heavily damaged two. A

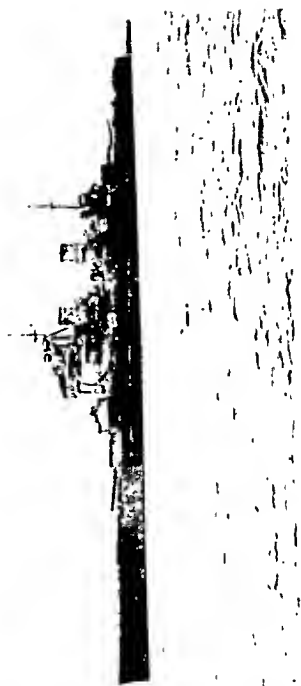


H.M.S. "REPULSE"



CAPTAIN W. G. TENNANT, H.M.S. "REPULSE."

1 and 1/2



H.M.S. "PRINCE OF WALES"





H.M.S. "PRINCE OF WALES"

British Official

large warship, believed to have been a battleship, was sunk by the combined efforts of Dutch and American bombers. On a conservative estimate, the convoy suffered the following losses:

Sunk for certain: 10 troop transports, 1 destroyer, 1 large warship (believed to be a battleship).

Probably sunk: 1 aircraft-carrier, 6 other ships.

Damaged: At least 23 Japanese ships.

In addition, eight American army bombers, one of which was lost, attacked a large Japanese transport lying in the river at Balikpapan and sank her, and scored a direct hit on a Japanese cruiser lying outside the harbour. This was a fine example, not only of co-operation between naval and air forces, but of international co-operation between the Americans and the Dutch.

The three days' concentrated attack and the night actions dispersed those ships of the invasion armada which had not been damaged or sunk. Some were withdrawn and others sought refuge in various harbours under Japanese control. The scattered ships were sought for by the American and Dutch air forces, and on 2 February three of the enemy transports were located off Balikpapan, on the east coast of Borneo, by American bombers. Two of these transports were sunk for certain and a third badly damaged and probably sunk as well.

The other check to the enemy's progress, already referred to, was the great counter-stroke by aircraft-carriers, cruisers and destroyers of the American Navy on 31 January and 1 February, 1942. The Marshall Islands are grouped about the parallel of 10 degrees north. They form two groups or chains and are nearly all coral islands. The nearly land-locked lagoons of the larger islands are suitable as temporary naval bases and as refuelling points for seaplanes. The Ralik group to the east consists of thirteen islands, and the Ralik, to the west, of eleven islands. The total area is 158 square miles. Jaluit is the most important island in the administration centre, and Magern the most populous, with 2,600 inhabitants. The total population of the group is about 10,000. This archipelago was annexed by Germany in 1885 and in the last War was occupied by an Australian force on 12 September 1914. Under the Treaty of Versailles these islands and the Caroline Islands, farther west, were placed under Japanese mandate. For an invasion of Australia or New Zealand these islands are of the greatest strategical importance. For some years the Japanese had taken extraordinary steps to close them to all strangers. It was suspected that fortifications were being built and other military preparations made. Subsequent events showed that this had been done on a very large scale. Our own Intelligence Service seemed to be incapable of finding out what was going on. On more than one occasion before the outbreak of war I myself raised this matter privately with the British Government, and was always told that they had not been able to get any information!

The Marshall Islands lie approximately 2,000 miles from Pearl Harbour and here, undoubtedly, the Japanese gathered their forces for the surprise attack on that base on 7 December 1940. Lying to the south of the Equator is another large group of coral islands, the Gilberts. There are sixteen of them, with an area of 166 square miles and a population of about 24,000 people. The islands of this group



CAROLINE ISLANDS

were proclaimed a British Protectorate in 1892, and, at the request of the natives, annexed as a colony in 1915. Ocean Island is the administrative centre and the seat of government. It had not been considered necessary to defend them and, on the principle of not dispersing forces, this was probably the right policy. They were seized by Japan immediately she declared war on Great Britain, and there still more advanced bases and fuelling stations were established. The American forces under Vice-Admiral F. Halsey, Jnr., took the defenders of these two groups of islands by surprise, and carried out a most successful operation. The naval aircraft flying from the American carriers attacked with bombs, torpedoes, cannon and machine-guns, and the surface ships bombarded the shore establishments, hangars, barracks and batteries. The island of Taroa, which was the most strongly fortified place in the group, was heavily bombed from the air and blasted from

end to end with heavy shells from the American cruisers. The results were spectacular. The rapid and highly accurate fire of the ships' artillery and the stream of high-explosive shells turned the whole area into a shambles. Guns from the shore batteries were seen flying into the air as a result of the explosions and blocks of buildings and store-houses were literally flattened out. When the enemy had recovered from his surprise, the defending aircraft came into action and eight Japanese bombers made a high-level attack on the American warships at 12,000 feet, dropping sixteen 500-lb. bombs. All missed. Certain of the American warships were hit by smaller bombs and there were casualties, but no serious damage. The shipping in the harbours was attacked by shell fire and torpedo-carrying planes, and the most important vessel, a 17,000-ton Japanese aircraft-carrier, was sunk. The islands attacked were Makim Jaluit, Wotje, Kwakalien and Roi in Kwajalein, and Taroa in Malolap Atoll. At Roi two hangars, the ammunition dumps, the fuel storage, many warehouses and the radio station were utterly destroyed. At Wotje two hangars, oil storage tanks, workshops, two anti-aircraft batteries and a battery of five coastal guns were blown to pieces. Two more hangars, all the oil fuel tanks, the workshops and storehouses were destroyed at Taroa. Apart from the slight damage to the warships, the Americans lost five aeroplanes. Besides the aircraft-carrier the Japanese lost a light cruiser, a destroyer, two submarines and eleven auxiliary vessels, including oil tankers. Thirty-eight Japanese aircraft were destroyed, consisting of two large flying-boats, fifteen fighters and twenty-one bombers.

On 3 February the first air raids were made on the island of Java. The main attack was concentrated on Sourabaya, and was made by eighty bombers escorted by a large number of fighters. Eight Japanese fighters and two bombers were brought down by the defending aircraft and by anti-aircraft fire. The large hotels in Sourabaya seem to have been picked out as special targets, apparently because the Japanese thought that General Wavell and his staff and the Inter-Allied High Command were there. Thirty-one people were killed and 139 injured.

*Ambona, the other naval base, had been attacked four days earlier.* On the morning of 30 January an air attack was made which lasted two hours, and soon afterwards an enemy transport fleet was sighted. That night Japanese cruisers, destroyers and transports approached the island and, at dawn the next morning, under a heavy bombardment from the sea, the landing began. The island, with all its establishments, was reduced after much hard fighting, in a fortnight, though resistance by guerillas was continued in the interior. The Dutch troops, native and European, resisted to the last, and the scorched earth policy was carried out with great thoroughness.

The Japanese plan of campaign from now on became clearer. Their High Command realized that the core and centre of Dutch resistance was the island of Java. Its northern shore, facing the

direction of the Japanese advance, was the most strongly defended. Instead of making a direct invasion of Java, therefore, the enemy first sought to establish himself in the islands and territories surrounding it. There aerodromes would come into his possession, as well as temporary naval bases, and once these footings were secured the Dutch air defences would be beaten down by repeated and heavy attacks on the airfields. With undisputed command of the air as the result of such operations, torpedo-carrying planes, dive-bombers and high-level bombers could be concentrated on the newly-won aerodromes in order to prevent reinforcements reaching the Dutch from Australia or India. With air command, plus a local superiority in naval strength, the Japanese would then hope to overwhelm the Dutch defenders by sheer weight of numbers, combined with a monopoly of air attack. This double strategy of obtaining vantage positions round Java, and also aerial and naval bases on the supply route from the United States to Java via Australia, explains the invasions of Sumatra to the north west, South Borneo to the north, the Southern territories of Celebes to the north-east, and the landings on the islands of Bali and Timor. Operations, mostly in the form of air attacks, on Port Moresby in the Australian mandated territory of New Guinea and on Darwin were probably diversions with the aim of confusing allied strategy. There were signs of such confusion. Probably the best policy to have been adopted to check the Japanese plans was to reinforce Java as strongly as possible and particularly with aircraft. This was all the more important after the fall of Singapore. The battle of Australia could best be fought in Java. The Dutch, as we have already seen, were the best prepared of the Allies, and, so far as their slender resources permitted, were relatively strong. If Java could be held with its important naval base and well-placed and well-sound aerodromes, it was a good position for a jumping-off place for counter-attacks. If, on the other hand, Java fell, the process of turning the invaders out of the Dutch East Indies as a preliminary to carrying the war farther north would be a long and costly one. There were apparently hesitations as to whether Java should be reinforced and every effort made to hold the island, or whether there should be a general retreat to Australia. The British High Command had another difficult problem in Burma. It was equally important to keep the Japanese out of as much Burmese territory as possible in order to be able to continue to send supplies of badly needed war equipment, tanks and aeroplanes to the numerically strong Chinese armies. With the loss of Malaya, it was difficult for the British to reinforce Java from India. The main source of help, therefore, was the United States of America. Some warships and troops were sent. Long-range bombers were flown all the way to Australia by way of the Pacific islands, and thence to Java. The main lack was fighter aeroplanes. This meant shipping them in convoys, as fighter aeroplanes could not fly the distances involved, especially after the Japanese had made lodgments in Bali and Timor.

It is not generally realized that air strength is not mobile. Though heavy bombers and transport planes can be flown great distances without refuelling, they cannot operate efficiently without large ground staffs and establishments to service them.\* This applies also to the fighter aeroplanes which, beyond a certain distance, must be carried by ship. Squadrons of operational aircraft must have at their service very large ground staffs of mechanics, riggers, armourers and other technicians. They must have large supplies of spare parts and stores of ammunition and bombs. These must be carried by ship in a campaign of the nature I am describing. As already stated, the Dutch had many well-found aerodromes and good ground staffs to look after their planes; but great additional ground equipment and ground staffs were required for the increased air establishments required to meet the Japanese offensive. In the event some American air strength was deployed in Java. Whether more could have been sent in the time is, of course, arguable. The Dutch authorities certainly thought more could have been sent. If they were right, the cause of the neglect to act with sufficient vigour for the reinforcement of Java lay in indecision in high places, and I have indicated the clumsy organization set up in London known as the 'Pacific Council', with a combined General Staff in Washington, and General Wavell in nominal command of the whole Pacific area of operations.

Early in February the sixty-four-years-old Admiral Thomas Hart, who had been in command of the American Asiatic fleet and had been appointed in supreme command of all naval forces in the area on the staff of General Wavell, asked to be relieved of his post. His health had broken down under the great strain. His brilliant services were recognized on all sides, but, in the circumstances, his decision to retire was appreciated as a wise one. His place, as commander of the combined naval forces, British, Dutch and American, in the area was taken by Vice-Admiral C. E. L. Helfrich, who had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Netherlands naval forces in the Dutch East Indies in January 1940. Of his thirty-four years' service, twenty had been spent in the East Indies. This fifty-five-years-old sailor was generally regarded as the most brilliant and capable officer on the Dutch Navy List. An old destroyer captain, he had been Chief of the Naval Staff at Batavia from 1932-33 and in 1935 he was appointed to command a detached squadron in the East Indies. Admiral Helfrich was, therefore, very familiar with the waters and had a reputation for great dash and courage and of being a fine leader of men.

To describe the course of the preliminary operations for the assault on Java: the Japanese lost no time after the capitulation of the British force at Singapore in attacking the great island of Sumatra on the other side of the Straits of Malacca. On 6 February heavy air raids were made on Palembang. This was the first of a series of similar attacks until 14 February, when the grand assault began with the landing of many hundreds of parachutists in three districts near the

town. Their duty was to seize the available oil wells, oil stores, and oil refining plants before the Dutch could destroy them, as they had done with such effect at Balikpapan and Tarakan in Borneo.

Simultaneously landings were made from a large number of transports at various points along the coast and at the mouth of the River Moesi, forty-five miles downstream from Palembang. The first objective failed. The Dutch and their native troops were well prepared and the parachutists met with a hot reception. They were wiped out practically to a man. In this the Dutch were assisted by British personnel, mostly aerodrome ground staffs evacuated from Singapore. When the enemy had made the Singapore aerodromes unusable by heavy air attack and long-range gunfire, the few British fighting aeroplanes remaining continued to operate in defence of the fortress from the Dutch aerodromes in Sumatra. To look after them, their ground staffs and technicians were brought by sea from Singapore and took a notable part in the fighting. The parachutists were well armed with tommy-guns and light mortars. British, Dutch and American aircraft made heavy and repeated attacks on the transports and invasion barges. Five large transport ships and two Japanese cruisers were heavily damaged. One of the cruisers was last seen badly on fire. Hurricanes and Blenheims of the Royal Air Force made repeated low-flying attacks with their machine-guns and cannon on the barges packed with Japanese soldiers slowly moving up the river in the direction of Palembang. Some of the Hurricanes with their eight machine-guns made as many as six separate attacks in the first day. The Japanese, however, were flying from the aerodromes in Southern Borneo, and so heavily bombed the nearby Sumatra aerodromes as to render them useless; and the short-range Hurricanes could no longer be refuelled and re-armed. Despite considerable losses the invaders were pushing on towards the oilfield.

On the principle of taking no risks the Dutch authorities began the greatest work of destruction ever accomplished in war. The Palembang district produced 5,000,000 tons of oil a year. This was more than half the whole output of the Dutch East Indies. Dynamite charges were lowered down the wells and exploded. The machinery was blown up likewise, and the immense stores of petroleum set on fire. They burnt for nine days. This was a greater destruction of capital wealth than even the blowing up of the Dnieper Dam in the Ukraine by the retreating Russians. It ranks with the action of the Dutch in the religious wars in Europe when they broke the dykes and flooded their country rather than let it fall into the hands of the enemy. Apart from the immense value of the oil wells and stored petroleum, the refineries and surface works were worth nearly £9,000,000. During the next forty-eight hours the Japanese invaders forced their way through the defensive lines of the garrison and occupied Palembang in triumph, only to find it a burnt-out shell. So complete was the destruction that the Dutch experts have given the opinion that many of the most important wells will

never produce again. Without flinching, the Dutch destroyed the results of many years of labour, enterprise and expenditure in one of the greatest holocausts the world has ever seen.

The capture of burnt-up Palembang did not herald the end of resistance in Sumatra. The immense island is mountainous, and much of it wild and unsettled country. Its industrial development, apart from the oil production, has been comparatively recent. The introduction of rubber growing had been successful in recent years on the plains; but the conquest of Sumatra by the Dutch was only completed in 1913. The tribes in the islands had held out against the Dutch for half a century. The most important of these, the Atchinese, were for long looked upon as intractable. After their final submission, however, they accepted Dutch rule with a good grace, but, to the surprise of the Japanese, showed no sort of friendliness to the invaders. Indeed, they proceeded to wage bloody and unrelenting guerrilla warfare against the Japanese for many weeks. In this they were aided by the Dutch regular forces, both European and native; and so long as this resistance continued the complete control of the channel between Sumatra and Malaya, of great strategical importance, was denied to the aggressors. Among the native troops operating in Sumatra were Meadoese from the Minahassa province of Celebes. They were superior to the Japanese in jungle fighting and made deadly use of their short, curved swords known as *klewangs*. Medan, the capital of Sumatra, was still held by the Dutch on 11 March.

As a preliminary to further operations against Java it was necessary for the Japanese to occupy the port of Telokbetong, in the extreme south of the island of Sumatra. Their advance from Palembang towards the port was delayed not only by the resistance of the Dutch field army but by the very thorough destruction of the railway line and all railway and road bridges *en route*. Nor were the allied air forces idle. As soon as the Japanese had occupied the aerodrome at Palembang it was heavily counter-attacked by Dutch and American aircraft operating from Java. These aerial forces continued also to attack the enemy troop transports, especially in Banka Strait, and on 18 February sank a large transport full of troops, hit two more transports and destroyed many landing barges with their human cargoes. The presence of Japanese short-range fighters was evidence of an enemy aircraft-carrier being in the neighbourhood. She was eventually located by air reconnaissance in the Gulf of Boni in South Celebes, successfully attacked in moonlight by Dutch and American bombers, hit repeatedly, and left heavily on fire.

The allies were now to receive an important moral reinforcement in the person of Major-General Gordon Bennett, whose magnificent leadership of the Australian forces in Malaya has already been described. With his A.D.C. and seven other Australian officers the General escaped from Singapore Island while terms of surrender were being negotiated with the Japanese Commander-in-Chief. The little party



made their way across the Strait of Johore to the mainland and, using a captured Japanese military map, were able to avoid enemy troops and to reach the west coast. There the A.D.C., Lieutenant Walker, swam out to a moored Chinese sampan, rowed it ashore, and took the party along the coast to the fishing village of Tongking, where they hired a small Chinese junk and set off under sail to Sumatra. On the fifth day out, when their food and water had been exhausted, they fell in with a coastguard vessel from Singapore evacuating refugees, and, having replenished their water supplies and provisions, reached the Sumatra coast at Djambi. There the general and his little party met the Dutch forces and eventually reached Australia by way of Java. Major-General Gordon Bennett was one of the few senior field officers to emerge from the Malayan débâcle with credit.

The Japanese attack on Bali, off the eastern extremity of the island of Java, did not go so well for them. Though they succeeded in getting strong forces ashore at the cost of heavy casualties, and occupying the aerodrome at Den Pasar, practically the whole of their fleet of warships and transports were destroyed by Dutch and American aeroplanes, including dive-bombers, attacking in the daylight, and Dutch and American naval forces attacking by night. On 19 February the bombers hit two cruisers and several transports. That night the Allied warships sank a cruiser and two destroyers and badly damaged two of the cruisers at the cost of one Allied destroyer lost and another damaged. On the next day the bombers damaged four cruisers, sank a transport, and damaged six others. The Japanese lost heavily in the air. One of the Japanese cruisers engaged was of the heavy type, armed with 8-inch guns. She, with another cruiser and a flotilla of destroyers, was engaged in the darkness by six American destroyers. One of the two Japanese cruisers blew up with all hands. The total enemy losses in the 48 hours were:

* Cruisers	..	..	1 sunk, 5 damaged
Destroyers	..	*	1 sunk
Transports	..	..	1 sunk, 6 damaged.

These brilliant and successful actions left the Japanese landing parties temporarily isolated. They were then subjected to a heavy bombardment in both high-level and dive-bombing attacks. At least four Japanese planes were shot down in the air and six of their bombers destroyed on the ground. In the course of these operations round Bali at least nineteen Japanese warships and transports were sunk or badly damaged. On the 24th more Japanese transports and reinforcements for Bali were located near Macassar, in Celebes, and three of them were sunk in bombing attacks.

We must now turn to the fortunes of the Australian territories 2,000 miles away to the eastward of the battle area of the Java Sea. The eastern half of New Guinea, and the Bismarck Archipelago, were severed from German rule under the Treaty of Versailles and placed

Coastal Pen

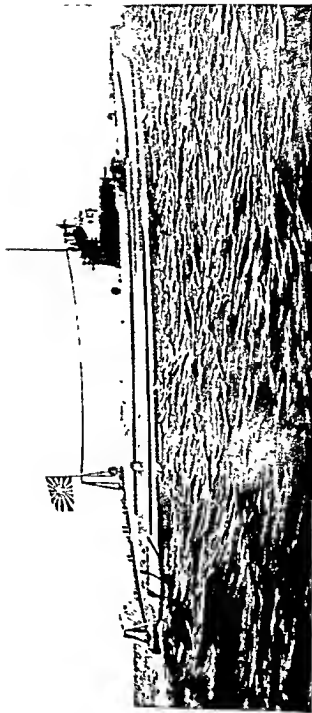
# SINGAPORE ISLAND





JAPANESE CRUISER "NANI"

*Sport & General*



JAPANESE SUBMARINE.

*Sport & General*



*Kry stone*

MANILA

under Australian mandate by the League of Nations. The German half of New Guinea was practically undeveloped, as were the 600 islands and their 93,000 square miles of territory in the Archipelago. The natives are primitive and savage, the interior mountainous and covered with thick jungle. Little had been done by the Germans in the way of road-making or aerodrome building. The task before the federal government of Australia was a formidable one. During the next twenty years the Government at Canberra embarked on one of the most ambitious and, on the whole, successful, programmes of colonial development ever attempted in the tropics. From the beginning the work of the Australian officials earned the warmest praise from the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations. Great progress had been made in the difficult task of, literally, civilizing the indigenous inhabitants, putting down tribal warfare, educating them and teaching them modern agricultural methods. Except for a few police, no attempt was made to arm the natives for their own defence. This was strictly in accordance with the terms of the mandate. Rabaul, the capital of the Bismarek Archipelago in New Britain, was developed into a good port. The interior of the larger islands and of New Guinea itself was opened out by aeroplane. The gold mines in the interior of New Guinea were worked by this means, the heavy mining machinery being carried by air. Agricultural settlements were established in the mountains, herds of cattle and flocks of sheep being taken by air to colonies 11,000 feet above sea level. Cannibals, addicted for centuries to head-hunting, had been induced to play a part in this development of the country. The progress made was almost miraculous. In some of the hitherto unexplored territories of the interior were tribes who had never before seen a white man. Japanese aggression put a stop to the whole of this benevolent work.

On 21 January the Japanese began their operations by a heavy air attack on Kavieng, a small town at the northern tip of the island of New Ireland, and similar attacks were made on Lorungan, the chief town on Manus Island, the largest of the Admiralty group of islands in the west of the archipelago. The coast town of Madang in the north of New Guinea was also bombed. These attacks and the much heavier series of raids on Rabaul were made by long-range bombers flying from the Caroline Islands, protected by fighters flown from an aircraft-carrier. The first effect of these bombings was the flight of most of the native inhabitants. They simply took to the jungle. Rabaul had been fortified and was held by a small garrison supported by squadrons of the Royal Australian Air Force. A fierce resistance was offered, and a number of the attacking aeroplanes shot down by anti-aircraft fire in the air. The air bombing of Rabaul was followed by an invasion in force by Japanese troops on 23 January. After a spirited resistance the Australian garrison withdrew to prepared positions, first destroying such military stores as could not be removed and everything else of value to the enemy. The Japanese army came

in seventeen transports with artillery and tanks. The prepared position to which the garrison of Rabaul withdrew was at the western end of the peninsula, and there the Australians established themselves in the hills covered with dense jungle with the intention of holding out till the last, or until a relieving expedition arrived. Fortunately, nearly all the Australian women and children and other non-combatants had been evacuated.

Before Rabaul was evacuated, the small local air detachment fought an action of such gallantry as to shed lustre on the already established fame of the Royal Australian Air Force. Six Australian pilots went to certain death in attacking a Japanese air armada in Wirraway aeroplanes. The Wirraway is a general purposes aeroplane made in Australia and, by modern fighter standards, is obsolete. Yet the six Australians went up in them to meet 110 bombers, dive-bombers and flying-boats, escorted by 26 fighters. They brought down aeroplane for aeroplane until they were all shot down themselves.

In New Guinea, owing to volcanic eruptions, the capital of the mandated territory was established at Lae. After repeated bombing and machine-gunning from the air by Japanese squadrons, it was judged to be untenable, and here again the small Australian forces retired to the jungle as the natives had already done. As soon as the Australian garrison from Rabaul had taken up their new positions the Japanese transports which had entered the harbour were heavily attacked by bombers of the Australian Air Force. Kavieng, in New Ireland, with the coastal towns of New Guinea, were eventually occupied by the enemy. Port Moresby was more strongly held; it could be supported by air from the Australian mainland, and successful resistance was offered. These Japanese attacks were generally held to be by way of a preliminary to invasion of Northern Australia. Whatever the plans of the Japanese High Command, they certainly had the intention of establishing themselves wherever there were aerodromes and sea harbours in order to make a subsequent allied counter-attack more difficult.

On 19 February the first Japanese bombs fell on the Australian mainland, when Darwin was attacked. This is a place of great strategical importance. It is the administrative centre for the northern territory which, unlike the Australian States, is governed directly from the federal capital of Canberra. It has a good natural harbour; and in 1939, when I was there, Darwin had considerable naval establishments. There were no docks, but important repair shops and large supplies of oil fuel for ships and aviation spirit for aircraft. The aerodrome is one of the most important in the whole of Australia, and a regular stopping-place for the Dutch civil air service flying to Sydney from Holland in peace-time, and for Qantas, the Australian service with flying rights as far as Singapore. It is intensely hot, in spite of being on the sea coast, though not nearly so hot as some of the inland towns I visited in the northern territory of Queensland, where I

experienced temperatures higher than any I had met with in the tropics.

On the outbreak of the European war the defences of Darwin were improved and, as the Japanese menace grew, great increases were made in the garrison and air establishment. Part of the argument used against the programme of a 'White Australia' is that the northern territories are unsuitable for European colonization. I met in Darwin families of healthy children representing the fourth generation of settlers of British stock. I saw large parties of strong young Australian labourers working on the roads and the railways and, despite the refusal of the Australians to lead the sort of life which Europeans are supposed to adopt in very hot climates, and their apparent indifference to climatic conditions, their health appeared to be excellent. Darwin's importance lies in the fact that naval and air forces based there in sufficient strength command the Timor Sea entrance to the Indian Ocean. It would have been in a stronger posture for defence if the Australians had completed their project of a north and south trunk railway line from Darwin to Adelaide. The outbreak of war saw this railway line completed from Adelaide as far north as Alice Springs in the centre of the vast sub-continent which is as big in area as the whole of the United States of America. In the north a railway had been built from Darwin south to the northern territory town of Birdum. In between these two railway systems was 600 miles of wild and roadless country. When the European war broke out there was obviously no time to build the missing link of 600 miles of railway, but the federal government completed the communications by a first-class all-weather motor road. Thus it was possible to send men and material by rail to Alice Springs, thence by motor vehicles to Birdum, and then again by railway to Darwin.

Having flown over most of this country I venture the opinion that no enemy general in his senses, of Japanese or any other nationality, with hostile intentions towards Australia, would embark on a great expedition from Darwin aimed at conquest. The Japanese plan would be to establish themselves at Darwin and attempt to hold it in order that, together with the capture of the island of Timor, they could dominate this entrance to the Indian Ocean. Timor is 400 miles from Darwin, and was invaded by the Japanese on 20 February. This island is the easternmost of what I have described as the southern chain of the Dutch East Indies. Here ends the Indonesian racial settlements. The sea between it and Northern Australia, with a bad reputation for storms, forms a barrier which through the ages cut off the great island of Australia from Asiatic or other Pacific influences. Crossing this sea the traveller passes not only from one continent to another, but from one racial territory to another, as different as Europe is from Asia. Before the early Dutch and British explorers and the first settlement, Australia was inhabited by an entirely different race of people. The 'black boys' are as different from the great Malay race as Africans



from Europeans. The fauna and flora are equally distinct. It is a curious freak of past history that the great canoe voyages of the Pacific peoples took the Maoris by way of the islands to New Zealand, but led to no infiltration from the Pacific into Australia. Timor was divided between the Dutch and the Portuguese, the latter occupying the north-eastern half of the island. This territory, the ancient Portuguese settlement of Macao on the Chinese mainland, and Goa on the west coast of India are the chief relics of the Portuguese bid for Empire in the East. At the outbreak of war in the Pacific, Portuguese Timor was garrisoned by a handful of native soldiers and police and a few Portuguese officials. Before hostilities began the Japanese had created apprehension among the Dutch and Australians by inducing the Portuguese Government to grant them flying rights for a commercial air service to the Portuguese part of the island. As such a line could not possibly pay for itself commercially, or be justified in any other way, it was only too obvious that the Japanese were looking for a friendly aerodrome in a position of great strategical importance. Just before the Japanese attack on British and American territory their submarines were sighted off Timor. With the outbreak of war the Australian and Dutch Governments, working in collaboration, acted with great promptitude. A mixed force of Dutch and Australian troops occupied Portuguese Timor and, at the same time, the government in Lisbon was given assurances that no permanent infringement of Portuguese sovereignty was intended, and that the territories would be restored at the end of the war. The Portuguese Government protested, and a compromise resulted. One thousand one hundred Portuguese soldiers were sent from Europe and should have arrived in a Portuguese convoy the day after the Japanese landed. They were to have taken over the guardianship of the Portuguese territory from the Dutch and Australians.

The Japanese succeeded in occupying the capital—Dilli—and the aerodrome. Simultaneously, an attack was made on Kupang, the capital of Dutch Timor, at the south-western extremity of the island.

By the end of February allied reinforcements began to make their presence increasingly felt. At the eastern extremity of the war zone in the Bismarck Archipelago the port of Rabaul came under heavy attack by the Australian Air Force. I have described its capture, and it was obviously the intention of the Japanese to make this their principal port of assembly and supply base for further offensives. During the last week of the month a number of heavy bombing raids were made by the Australians on shipping in the harbour, the aerodrome, and military establishments and camps. In this area the Australian pilots certainly established an ascendancy and the Japanese plans were thrown out of gear.

American ground staffs and British and Australian troops, in all about 4,000, had arrived in Java. Between the 24 and 26 February American submarines, operating from Sourabaya, torpedoed two

Japanese troopships, an auxiliary vessel and a supply ship. They also attacked a squadron of Japanese warships consisting of cruisers and destroyers, and, though forced to dive, registered at least one torpedo hit. These vessels attacked by the American submarines were concentrating for the long-expected invasion of Java. In the same period allied bombing attacks were made on transports carrying Japanese troops to reinforce the invading army in Sumatra and direct hits were made on a 10,000-ton transport and on a 5,000-ton transport. Another transport was hit in the Banka Straits, north-east of Sumatra. It is noteworthy that in the aerial combats Dutch, British, American and Australian pilots in the East Indies, and British and American pilots in Burma, outclassed their Japanese opponents. Japanese progress, particularly in the continual bombing of aerodromes and other objectives in Java, was only accomplished by sheer weight of numbers. The end of February saw the lists prepared for the great Japanese assault on Java, the last key position of the Democracies holding out in the Western Pacific. It was in these circumstances that the Lieutenant Governor-General of the Netherlands East Indies, Dr. Hubertus van Mook, issued his famous order of the day:

"The time for destruction and withdrawal has now ended, and the time for holding out and attacking has come. We are not alone in this fight. The foreign troops which are here will remain and will be maintained through a regular stream of reinforcements. Let there be no light-hearted optimism, and let us prove our worth during the few months which separate us from large-scale Allied effort."

On 27 February the Japanese invading armada, with a strong naval escort, sailed for the invasion of Java. Three days before, shells from an enemy warship fell for the first time on the Californian coast of the United States. While President Roosevelt was delivering one of his famous broadcasts to the nation and the world, a large Japanese submarine surfaced half a mile off the coast at Elwood, twelve miles west of Santa Barbara. She was armed with two 5-inch guns, and with these fired twenty-five projectiles at the oil refineries and the derricks of the oil wells. Little material harm was done; the damage attempted was psychological: Like some minor air activities off the Pacific coast of America in the previous December, the intention was to reinforce that section of public opinion active in every country in time of war which takes the short-sighted view that all the nation's naval and military forces should be concentrated at home for the defence of its own backyard.

## CHAPTER X

## THE GATEWAY OF INDIA

THE Government of India Act received the Royal Assent on 2 August 1935. When the text of the Act was first issued in the form of a Parliamentary Bill, a prominent Tory diehard,<sup>1</sup> who had taken an active part as a member of the Round Table Conference preceding this publication, said to me: "Well, if we are going to lose India at any rate we have saved Burma." He referred to the separation of the administration of Burma from the government of the Viceroy of India and the India Office in Whitehall. In due course a brass plate with the inscription 'Burma Office' was indeed fixed to the wall of the former India Office. The idea underlying this cryptic remark and the policy behind it was that the more politically-minded Indians would achieve full nationhood and the right to remain in or secede from the British Commonwealth as a Dominion, but that the Burmese would be content with an inferior status, at any rate for some time to come. This hope was falsified. The Burmese soon demonstrated that they expected the same political development and constitutional advance as the Indians. In 1939 in Rangoon I was given plenty of evidence of Japanese intrigue and propaganda in the country especially among the younger Buddhist clergy. The Japanese sought to canalize Burmese nationalism in their own direction. There was an incipient fifth column in the country even then. As with the Nazi influence in Europe, prior to the outbreak of the second World War, the Japanese propaganda had most success with the wealthier sections of the Burmese. In 1936 a party of Burmese notables, including U Saw, who had a newspaper then and was afterwards Prime Minister, were invited to Japan, where they were taken on a conducted tour, shown every attention and made many friends in the country. The Japanese Government attracted a few Burmese students to Tokio, where scholarships were offered to them at the University on very favourable terms. The Japanese also used the radio for propaganda purposes, and a weekly broadcast was made from Tokio in the Burmese language. Although, when he became Prime Minister, U Saw was the head of a party of only 34 members in the House of Representatives out of a total of 132 members, his government was a coalition supported by the 9 unofficial European members. This government replaced the administration of Dr. Ba Maw, leader of the Sin-ye-tha or Workers' Party, supported by the Left wing Do-ba-ma Asi-ayone led by Thakin Kodaw Hmaing, the eminent Burmese historian and author. In the autumn of 1941 U Saw visited London for the purpose of obtaining a promise of Dominion status for the country after the war. This was refused,

<sup>1</sup> Americanese—Old Guard Conservative: Modern Vernacular—Colonel Blimp.

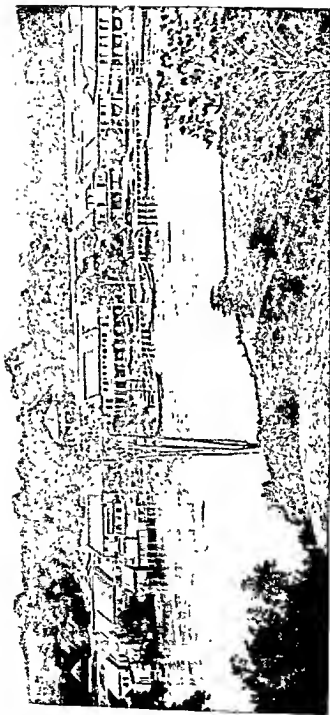
partly on the grounds that the Burmese, who do not take kindly to military life, were incapable of defending their country.

A word of explanation is required here. The country consists of four great valleys formed by the four rivers of Burma, the Irrawaddy, its tributary the Chindwin, the Sittang, and the Salween. All these flow southwards into the Gulf of Martaban, and at their mouths are the chief seaports of Rangoon, Masein, Moulmein, and Akyab. These valleys are divided by mountain ranges the most important being the great spur of the Himalayas which turns southwards and divides Burma from India and the eastern range dividing Burma from Indo-China and Thailand. The hill country is inhabited by tribesmen, ruled by their own chiefs with British political officers to advise them. The most important are the Shans, Karens, and Talaiings. These tribes are primitive and in some of the Shan States are backward. So long as Burma remained within the British Empire and the Royal Navy held command of the seas, the country was safe enough. Its peril came after the Japanese had obtained control of Indo-China and a predominating influence in Siam. Furthermore, under modern conditions and especially since the coming of the aeroplane the mountain barriers were less of a defence than in earlier days. These modern conditions made Burma the gateway to India from the east. For this latter reason alone it is questionable whether it was wise policy to separate Burma, which used to be a province of India, from the Indian Federation. Certainly the military control of Burma should have been left under the Commander-in-Chief, India—this was made evident by subsequent events. U Saw was bitterly disappointed and made no secret of it. He was even indiscreet enough in London to hint that he would now seek for an arrangement with the Japanese; and he started to return to his country via the United States, apparently with the intention of visiting Japan. A watch was kept on his movements, and it was found that he made contact with certain Japanese authorities *after* the Japanese intervention in the World War. In December U Saw found himself stranded in Honolulu and, at the request of the British Government, was detained under preventive arrest.

Though U Saw represented only a small section of the Burmese intelligentsia, and the majority of the Burmese were reliable, the risk of a clique intriguing with the Japanese was unfair to the people of India. The distance from Rangoon to Calcutta is 650 miles by aeroplane and from Rangoon to Madras 1,120 miles. The main means of communication between India and Burma is by sea. There are only mountain tracks across the mountains between Assam and Upper Burma. Nevertheless, during the last fifty years there has been a considerable emigration from India to Burma, and at the outbreak of war there were nearly as many Indians in Burma as Burmese. Like the Malays, the Burmese are an easy-going people mainly interested in agriculture and divided into landowners and land-

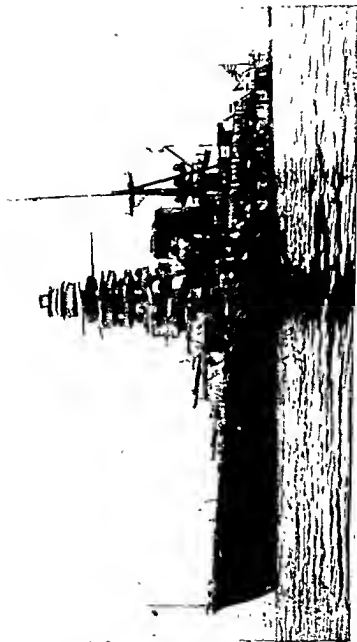
workers. There is no important middle class, and few Burmese merchants. The chief trade of the country was in European, Indian, and Chinese hands. Most of the manual work of the country, such as road and railway building and dock work, was done by immigrant Indians. The Indians, therefore, have a great stake in the country, though there was a certain amount of friction between the immigrant Indians and the Burmese. The hill tribes only desired to be left alone. Apart from its strategical importance, Burma is a country of great wealth with a flourishing trade. The great city and port of Rangoon was second only in importance to Calcutta and Bombay. It has eight miles of river front alongside which lie great ocean-going steamers. It exported 3,000,000 tons of rice and 300,000 tons of teak every year. The port lies fifty miles by river from the sea and is connected by a pipe line to the great oil-fields at Yenam-Gyaung, near Mandalay, and exports 1,000,000 tons of oil annually. Rangoon and the secondary ports were of the greatest importance to the cause of the allies in the Pacific campaign. Rangoon was the principal unloading port for the traffic to China. The city is connected by railway to the up-country town of Lashio and from there the great Burma Road winds over the mountains to Chungking. The Irrawaddy is navigable to Mandalay on the same railway and an alternative route of supply. The total area of Burma is 233,710 square miles and the total population is nearly 15,000,000. The largest city, Rangoon, had a population of 500,000, of whom some 2,000 were Europeans. Apart from the three principal products of rice, petroleum, and teak, Burma produces great quantities of cotton, sugar, tobacco, and tea. The country also has great mineral wealth including gold, silver, iron, lead, tin, coal, and wolfram. The ruby mines, the property of the Crown, have been famous for centuries. The Burmese Empire, founded in the sixteenth century, began to expand in the latter half of the eighteenth century when the Burmese Emperors waged wars of conquest against China, Siam, and Assam. They eventually came into contact with the British and in 1824 their encroachment on British territory led to the first Burmese War. This terminated with the loss of the provinces of Aracan and Tenasserim to the British Empire. The second Burmese War, in 1852, lost them the province of Pegu. There was peace until 1885, when King Theebaw fell foul of the Government of India and the third war resulted in the annexation of the whole of Burma. Though Burma undoubtedly progressed under British rule, and there was substantial constitutional advancement, the memories of the wars and annexations were fresh. The details of the three Anglo-Burmese wars are not pleasant reading.

In their attack on Burma the Japanese received some help from Siamese troops. They had promised the province of Tenasserim to the Siamese Government. The main problem facing the defenders of Burma was to prevent a Japanese invasion from Siam into this province of Tenasserim. The mountain range dividing these terri-



E.N.A.

KUCHING, SARAWAK



JAPANESE BATTLESHIP "MUTSU"

Spott & Green

tories is a natural barrier, but is pierced by Kawkarcik Pass. This is the orthodox invasion route to Burma from the east. The pass is traversed by a good road and was held in force. Instead of the expected frontal attack the Japanese, with their Siamese auxiliaries, and using only their infantry, mortars, and light artillery, easily carried on pack animals, made their way by jungle tracks and elephant paths to outflank the British holding force. The Japanese aptitude for passing through jungle country and over mountains supposed to be impassable barriers to large forces, and the highly specialized training of their troops used for this purpose was the surprise of the campaign. Thus the port of Tavoy, an important tin centre, and the British aerodomes in the south of Tenasserim province were approachable from the east only by rough tracks. Contrary to expectations, the Japanese crossed the mountains in force. Their soldiers travelled light, with a minimum of equipment and relied for their food supplies on the country or, in the last resort, on the airtight canister of rice that each man carried. Well acclimatized and knowing the country through previous espionage, they were able to advance into southern Burma like a swarm of ants and apparently quite indifferent to casualties. Indeed, one of the most remarkable features of the whole campaign in the Pacific was the willingness of the Japanese High Command to sacrifice their men in any numbers to reach the chosen objectives. Unfortunately their opponents went to the other extreme and were too casualty conscious. Though the British and Indian troops defending the territory were eventually outnumbered, they had the advantage of holding their own prepared positions served by a railway and by good roads. The first infiltrations by the Japanese were made through very rough country, but they afterwards set to work to drive through roads capable of taking tanks with great energy and speed and were able to bring up heavier artillery as soon as these roads were usable. Nor, at any rate at the beginning of the campaign, did the Japanese have air superiority. The British and American pilots established an air ascendancy, and air reinforcements were sent from India. The Japanese successes are traceable to the aptitude of their infantry for jungle warfare and their ability to live and fight with the minimum of supplies. Any European troops in the tropics and also, to a certain extent, the Indian troops, must be supplied with a minimum of food and standard of comfort to carry on a long campaign in difficult climatic conditions without loss of morale. Even the Indian troops do not subsist on rice.<sup>1</sup> In the first six weeks of the campaign, from the middle of January, when the main Japanese forces crossed the Siamese border east and south of Moulmein, they advanced 150 miles in face of fierce and determined resistance bringing them to the Salween river, the most suitable defensive

<sup>1</sup> The invaders also received help from the local inhabitants who, at the beginning, were in many cases ready to work for the enemy for money; and, later, from disorderly elements eager to be on the winning side and to loot.



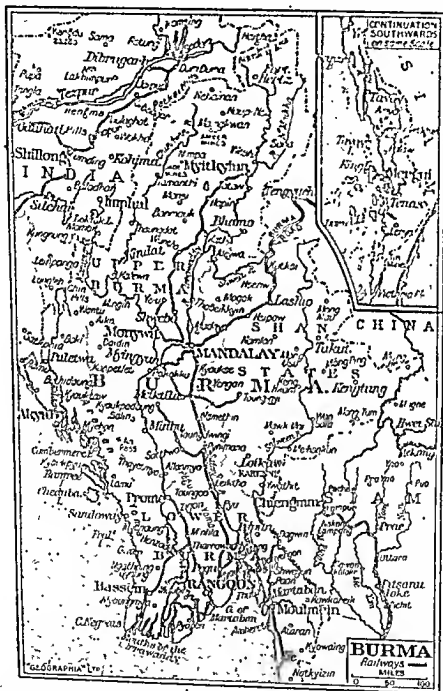
position east of Rangoon. What may be called the southern Japanese movement, consisted, therefore, of an invasion of the southern sea coast province of Tenasserim and then an advance up the coast to the head of the Gulf of Mataban and to Rangoon. Some three Japanese divisions, each of about 20,000 men, were used in this campaign and they were opposed by eight battalions of British and Indian troops with their auxiliary services; or about 8,000 bayonets. The odds, therefore, were about seven to one. The Japanese northern campaign was based on Chiengmai at the head of the railway from Bangkok. From the Siamese town of Chiengmai they attempted an invasion of Central Burma with another four divisions, or about 80,000 men, but found themselves opposed by a Chinese army of 60,000 which had marched down the Burma Road and thence across country to meet the invaders. This northern campaign did not go so well from the Japanese point of view. The reason is simple. The opposing forces were numerically equal, or nearly so; wherein lies the great lesson of the Pacific campaign, namely, the importance of masses of ground troops to oppose the Japanese hordes.

As soon as news reached Burma of the Japanese declaration of war, the available British, Indian, and Burmese forces were mobilized, placed on a war footing, and took up their defensive positions according to the pre-arranged plan. They were under the command of Lieutenant-General D. K. McLeod, who on 9 December 1941 issued the following Order of the Day:

'By air, sea, and land, Burma is ready. Supported by the Royal Navy and powerful squadrons of the Royal Air Force we shall throw back the invaders and free Burma for ever from the threat which dawned to-day.'

On 18 December a large convoy arrived at Rangoon from Calcutta carrying Indian troops with full equipment. The Royal Air Force, nobly assisted by the American volunteer pilots who had been defending the Burma Road, took the offensive and carried out a series of raids on Siamese aerodromes in Japanese occupation and on the docks at Bangkok. In the first three weeks of these raids over fifty Japanese aircraft were destroyed on the ground. On 23 December the Japanese Air Force struck back by raiding Rangoon. They met with strong opposition from British and American fighters and in the two raids on 23 and 25 December forty Japanese bombers were shot down. Unfortunately a number penetrated to the city and caused about two thousand civilian casualties. These bombings, though the Japanese suffered these heavy losses, created great panic amongst the Asiatic population. An evacuation began up country or back to India which did not end until Rangoon was denuded of nearly all its civil population. There was no local labour for the docks, and Chinese workmen had to be sent to unload British and American war material for transport to the Japanese armies. This lack of local

labour had been a great handicap in the defence of Singapore. It was one of our worst handicaps in the defence of Burma. Thus there



was no help in filling up the bomb craters made in our aerodromes and a number of the most important of these were later on rendered useless through this cause. Once more this great weakness in the

British position was exposed. We had not succeeded in enlisting the support of the population of the territories we were defending. Neither the Burmese nor the hill tribes were disloyal. Apart from adventurers and self-seekers the bulk of the Burmese had no desire for Japanese domination. A small fifth column of malefactors and looters came into prominence later; but it only had a nuisance value. But for fifty years the Burmese and the hill tribes had been taught to believe that their country was in an impregnable position and that its defence was the sole responsibility of the Imperial Power. There were battalions of soldiers recruited locally, notably the Burma Rifles, and they did good service in the campaign. Unfortunately there were not nearly enough of them. There was nothing in the nature of a national army in Burma. We should at least have taken steps to enlist the support of the vast Indian population. These were mostly from Bengal and no doubt not belonging to the military castes, but with the right lead they could have been mobilized for work behind the lines and for carrying on the life of the country. The Governor-General, Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, at one time Minister of Agriculture in Britain, did his best and showed great fortitude and determination throughout. But the foundations of British rule in Burma were not sufficiently robust or deep to withstand the impact of air warfare, nor the threat of invasion by a murderous enemy.

The most serious fighting in the first part of the southern campaign was confined to the opposing air forces. All this time, however, numerous columns of Japanese troops were making their way over the mountains and; as already described, Tavoy was taken in the rear and captured. This had the serious effect of cutting off the land communications with the port of Mergui, 110 miles to the south. It was held by a small garrison; and in the last week of January it was decided to evacuate it. This was accomplished on 27 January, the British forces leaving by sea with all their equipment and without interference from the enemy. Why this port was given up without a fight requires explanation. Still more mysterious was the failure to reinforce the garrison by sea. There was no naval opposition from the enemy at that time for the Malayan campaign was still in progress and the threat to Singapore had not developed. Mergui is the seaward terminus of the only suitable road for motor vehicles from Lower Siam. In Japanese hands the heaviest equipment could be brought down the railway from Bangkok and then taken across to Mergui for the support of the Japanese land army advancing up the coast towards Rangoon. It would also become a naval base, supplies being carried overland as described and of great value to the Japanese navy as soon as it was able to penetrate the Straits of Malacca. Mergui should have been made into a Tobruk; and its abandonment was a serious blunder.

Another serious loss was the port of Moulmein. It was first

threatened by enemy patrols who had crossed over from the Siamese frontier on 20 January. It was subjected to continual air raids and was then attacked from the land from several directions. On 30 January the small garrison holding Moulmein was forced to withdraw across the Salween river after removing their stores and equipment. It had been originally decided to hold Moulmein at all costs. Three days later, on 2 February, the Salween river, fast flowing and a formidable obstacle, was crossed by the Japanese to the north of Moulmein. A counter-attack restored the position for the time being. The scorched earth policy was not put into action. Most of the town and the important harbour facilities fell into Japanese hands undamaged.

The most encouraging events at this stage of the campaign were the heavy defeats of the Japanese air force in successive attempts to raid Rangoon. This was a kind of miniature battle of Britain, and the greatest credit is due to the British pilots and the United States volunteer group. On 23 January two waves of sixty Japanese aeroplanes each were driven off, fifteen being shot down and another nine probably destroyed. The Allies lost only two fighters and the enemy were forced to drop all their bombs outside the city. The air attack was renewed the next day when seven bombers and nine fighters were destroyed for the loss of one British fighter, whose pilot was saved. On the 28th and 29th further heavy raids were driven off and another thirty Japanese planes destroyed with no loss to the British or Americans. Until the end of February the air ascendancy over the Japanese was maintained and it was only the arrival of Japanese reinforcements released by the fall of Singapore and the difficulty already described in keeping the aerodromes in repair which led to the loss of the command of the air over Burma. Very gallant services were performed by the Indian Air Force with Indian pilots who arrived towards the end of February as a welcome reinforcement.

Another cheering event was the heavy action fought on 9 February on the Indo-Chinese frontier by the Chinese forces. They inflicted a substantial defeat on the Japanese army marching through the Shan Straits and forced it, with its Siamese allies, to withdraw in disorder. Cheing-mai, the main supply base of this invading force, was kept under heavy-air bombardment by the Allies. The British and Indian forces holding the Salween river resisted till 15 February. Their retreat was forced by the capture of the town of Mataban on the other side of the river mouth to Moulmein. This threatened their right flank and a retreat was made in good order to the Bilin river. This withdrawal was a great disappointment, as all attempts by the Japanese to cross the upper reaches had been defeated and the enemy had suffered heavy casualties. The Indian troops including Jats, Sikhs, Rajputs, Gurkhas, Punjabis, and Dogras represented men of the finest units in the Indian Army. They drove back continual and heavy attacks by the invaders. The Japanese now brought into

use rubber rafts, a gigantic edition of the rubber dinghys carried by aeroplanes operating over the sea. Inflated by the release of compressed air from cylinders these rafts could carry large numbers of troops or pieces of artillery or light tanks. On the middle and upper reaches of the Salween the invaders had been so heavily punished that they showed no disposition to pursue the retreating British army. The ascendancy of the British soldiers over the individual Japanese in close fighting was marked throughout this campaign. One of the two British battalions engaged, the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, who had been fighting a stubborn retreating action for six weeks, demonstrated this in the fighting round Mataban. There a company of this fighting regiment got to close quarters with the Japanese and charged them with the bayonet. These Japanese picked troops fell into a panic, threw away their weapons and fled, suffering considerable casualties.

The Bilin river lies thirty miles west of the Salween. Here it was obvious that only a holding action could be fought and on 18 February advance parties of the Japanese reached the left bank of the river and were engaged by the British on the right bank. One party made a crossing at the village of Danyengon, four miles north of the town of Bilin, where the railway crosses the river, but were destroyed or driven back into the river by a fierce counter-attack by the Gurkhas. It was now that the Japanese reinforcements in increasing numbers came into action and it was obvious that the last stand in defence of the vital railway from Rangoon to Moulmein would have to be made along the Sittang river. On 19 February Rangoon was closed as a port of entry and the sea approaches mined. The greater part of the equipment and munitions landed at the port for the use of the Chinese Government had been moved up country and the remainder was destroyed. The abandonment of Rangoon while the enemy were on the Bilin river, seventy-five miles to the east, was a major disaster to the allied cause. The loss of the petroleum from the Burma oil-fields hitherto loaded into tankers in the harbour meant the deprivation to India of her nearest supply of petroleum. There was another result even more serious. As already mentioned it was the main port of entry for the Burma Road which, in its turn, was the chief life line between Nationalist China and the Allies. Begun in the early part of 1938 this road traversed the mountains and valleys between Lashio, the Burmese railhead, to Kunming, the capital of Yunnan Province. Many thousands of Chinese peasants and workmen using hand implements and carrying earth in baskets toiled on a task that has been likened to the building of the Great Wall of China. The surface was flattened with hand-made stone rollers and rocks split by drilling holes in them, pouring in water and allowing it to freeze. Suspension bridges were made over the rivers and were bombed again and again by the Japanese, and repaired again with equal patience. The weapons and equipment carried

over this road in lorries and the equally important petrol and aviation spirit had enabled the Chinese armies to hold out against the superbly equipped Japanese forces after the coastal and industrial districts had been overrun. How many thousands of Chinese were killed in building the road, or died of disease, and how many lorries with their Chinese drivers were dashed to destruction in negotiating the hair-pin bends will probably never be known. It supplied the means of resistance and, presently, of victory to a population of 490,000,000 united in detestation of the Japanese aggressors and ablaze with anger at their atrocities and wanton destruction. It is noteworthy that when the Government of Burma prepared for war they were so short of modern equipment that they had to seek permission to broach the Chinese supplies waiting in Burma for transit. The Chinese officials on the spot were horrified; a hurried message was sent to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and a reply came instantly. This great-minded leader gave orders that the Burmese Government were to take anything they required for the defence of their territory and the vital road.

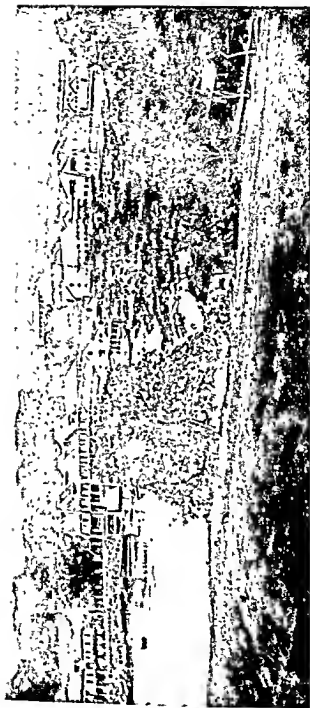
There are other means of forwarding supplies to Lashio besides the main railway from Rangoon. As already mentioned, river steamers ply on the Irrawaddy river to Bahmo, where there is road communication to Kyukhok on the main Burma Road. There had been a grave lack of foresight in not providing road communication between India and Burma. At the outbreak of war efforts were made to improve the existing tracks and to create a road system over the mountains. At the time of the closing of Rangoon it was hoped that this road system would be in operation in not more than six months. The Chinese authorities, with more foresight, had been at work for about a year on an alternative to the Burma Road from Assam through the eastern province of Thibet and so into their own territory to Chungking via Ningyuen. One of the objects of General Chiang Kai-shek in visiting India in February was to obtain more assistance for the completion of this road. This part of the General's visit was certainly successful. The Thibet Road, as it is called, would be an alternative to the routes across Burma in case the Japanese succeeded in overrunning the Burmese Central Province. As an engineering feat it will be an even greater achievement than the road from Lashio to Chungking. It passes over part of that gaunt plateau of Asia known as the Roof of the World. Some of the passes are 10,000 feet above sea level. Even a trickle of munitions over such a route would be invaluable to the Chinese forces. The old caravan route between China and Russian territory, the 'silk road,' had been used in the past when the Soviet Government was in a position to supply munitions to China; and a decisive victory by the Red Army over the German invaders might permit a resumption of this traffic and an improvement of the route. Fortunately there is another means of transit to China, the freight-carrying

aeroplane. The construction of landing grounds and aerodromes three or four hundred miles apart is a less formidable undertaking than the construction of motor roads in these inhospitable regions. In the second World War the carrying of weapons by large aeroplanes has been frequent. Both the Nazis and the Russians used freight-carrying aeroplanes for the transport of artillery and light tanks.

The potential power of a geographically united India and China is incalculable. Between them their populations comprise more than half mankind. Their combined population is ten times that of the total population of the Japanese archipelago. If India were aroused, united and ready to co-operate with China, the Japanese dream of the domination of Asia would remain a dream. The conquest of the fringes of Asia and the islands would not stave off the inevitable defeat.

The Bilin position was held for three days, during which there was almost continual fighting by day and by night. In this great action the Japanese made use of large numbers of elephants for bringing up reinforcements from the coast. On 20 February the British army retreated to the Sittang river. In this fighting the British and Indian troops still had considerable air support. The Japanese positions, transport and back areas were repeatedly attacked by British, American, and Indian bombers and fighters. The port of Moulmein, now being used by the Japanese as a base, was bombed continually. On 20 February the British and Indian troops broke off the engagement and retreated to the Sittang river, establishing a strong bridgehead on the enemy side to cover the important railway bridge at Sittang town, the line to Pegu and thence to Rangoon. As late as 25 February the Allied air forces still retained command of the air. A great bombing raid aimed at the aerodrome of Rangoon on the 25th was beaten back, and more than 30 Japanese aircraft destroyed, mostly fighters. The Allies lost four fighters. On the following day the Japanese returned to the attack and lost 22 of their aircraft against the loss of one Allied fighter.

Though this campaign was one long story of fighting retreats, counter-attacks and rearguard actions, Lieutenant-General Hutton, commanding all the Allied forces in Burma, had every reason to be proud of the behaviour of his troops on the southern front. I have already mentioned the fine conduct of the Indian regiments. The two British regiments, the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and the Duke of Wellington's regiment, wrote a page of military history which deserves to stand high in the annals of the British Army. These two battalions were in action or in face of the enemy almost continuously for seven weeks. They fought in a trying climate against an enemy vastly superior in numbers and with special aptitude and training for jungle warfare. They never faltered, they maintained their discipline, and they answered every call on their fortitude and heroism. They faced an enemy who was continually able to reinforce his army and to replace tired units with fresh troops. The



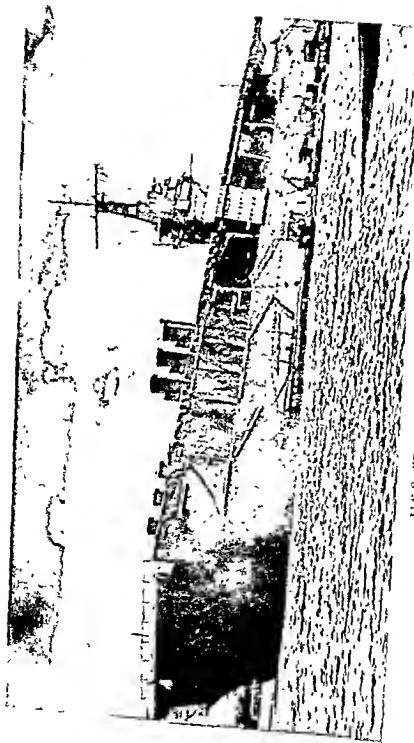
EN 4.

KUCHING, IN SARAWAK





KUCHING, SARAWAK



U.S.S. "RANGER": AIRCRAFT-CARRIER

Associated Press



BALIK PAPAN, OIL PORT IN DUTCH BORNEO

columns with elephants which came up from the coast were landed from a convoy of one hundred troopships which arrived at Mataban from Singapore. That the enemy could send this convoy without interference marked the nadir of British sea power in the East. There was no relief for the British battalions or their Indian comrades. The Japanese, especially the reinforcements from Singapore, were flushed with victory. Our men had to face that greatest strain on the soldier—continual retreat and the abandonment of position after position in the face of superior numbers. On 1 March 1942 the Japanese made their initial crossing of the Sittang river under cover of darkness and approached the railway line north of Pegu. The next morning they were counter-attacked and all killed or driven back over the river. The fighting was now in more open country, principally rice-fields and other cultivated land. On 3 March the enemy crossed the upper region of the Sittang river and heavy fighting took place at Waw, fifteen miles east of Pegu, the old capital of Burma sixty miles north-east of Rangoon. The bridgehead on the Sittang river was held till the morning of 23 February. The main body crossed the bridge under heavy enemy fire in the face of a Japanese concentration numbering at least five thousand. When this important railway bridge was blown up at 5.30 a.m., detachments of the Duke of Wellington's regiment and the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry were left on the eastern bank as a rearguard to hold back the enemy troops and prevent the bridge being rushed. At this point the river is eight hundred yards wide. Many of the British soldiers had left the continent of Europe by way of the Dunkirk beaches; indeed it was the Yorkshire Light Infantry which exchanged the first shots on the western front in the second World War. What they went through now was a worse and more trying experience than the evacuation from Dunkirk. Their comrades on the east bank provided what covering fire they could and all available allied aeroplanes were concentrated to give the necessary air support. These few hundreds of British soldiers under their brigadier then proceeded to hold off the swarming Japanese while their many wounded were ferried across the river on such small boats as could be collected, on hastily constructed bamboo rafts or on logs. Many of the wounded were taken across the river, without any such assistance, by their unwounded comrades supporting them in the water. The Japanese kept the river crossing under heavy fire from artillery and trench mortars and machine-gunning from the air whenever the British fighting aeroplanes allowed them to approach the area. This amazing retreat by water lasted for three days and three nights. The deeds of heroism performed in this extraordinary operation have never been surpassed in the history of warfare. Casualties were very heavy. These men had been continuously in action since 16 January. As the survivors arrived on the other bank they re-formed and went straight into the fighting line again. Most of them managed to carry their weapons across. As soon as they were

given fresh equipment and clothes they were again in action and under fire. Sittang river will be emblazoned on the colours of these two famous regiments. For sheer courage and fortitude no battle honours will stand higher.

The tide of the air battle had begun to turn in favour of the invaders. The Japanese advancees had gained for them forward aerodromes from which they were able to operate more fighters to protect their bombers and by being closer to Rangoon were able to make more sudden attacks. The defenders were themselves thus deprived of sufficient warning. In this way the Mingaladon aerodrome north of Rangoon was made unserviceable through the bombing of the runways. The fair city of Rangoon was now practically deserted and the prey of looters. Although the civil governor had given up control to the military, not enough troops could be spared to maintain order.

On 5 March fighting was taking place at Waw and in the approaches to Pegu; and now British tanks brought from India made their first welcome appearance.

The Japanese had not yet used tanks on this front and the defending forces had some initial advantage. Unfortunately the tanks were few in number and the onrush of the invading hordes could not be stemmed. On this same day, 5 March, Lieutenant-General T. J. Hutton was replaced as G.O.C. Burma by Lieutenant-General Sir H. R. L. G. Alexander. The new Commander-in-Chief came to the East with a great reputation. He conducted the final stages of the evacuation from the Dunkirk beaches, was the last senior officer to leave the shore and was largely responsible for, and had much to do with, the modernized training of the commando formations and parachute troops in Britain.

The Japanese officially claimed to have entered Rangoon at dawn on 9 March. The city had been partly isolated two days before when the enemy had crossed the railway to Mandalay north of Pegu and was, in fact, evacuated by the British forces on 7 March after thorough demolition. The fall of Rangoon marked the end of the southern campaign, but it was not the end of the Burmese operations. The northern campaign had gone better, as already described, thanks to the presence of a numerically strong Chinese army defending the Shan States, and covering the inland route to Chungking. The consequences of the fall of Rangoon have already been described. Almost as damaging was the blow to British prestige throughout the East. Fortunately prestige is a transient factor, and can be regained. Changes of policy as well as victories will be needed. After fifty years of British rule, the enemy were able to recruit and arm substantial numbers of Burmese to fight against their fellow-subjects.

## CHAPTER XI

## THE BATTLE OF JAVA

THE long expected invasion of Java may be said to have begun on 27 February 1942 when a fleet of some 100 Japanese troop transports was sighted approaching the Java Sea from the Strait of Macassar under strong naval escort. The long northern coast of Java is low lying, and inland of it is a large, flat plain stretching from east to west 30 to 40 miles wide, highly cultivated, thickly populated, and intersected with many roads and railway lines. The interior of the island is mountainous and the west coast is rugged, with steep cliffs, and few good harbours. Among the western range of mountains is the hill station of Bandoeng, which stands in a plateau surrounded by a range of mountains rising to 6,000 feet. Bandoeng is to Batavia, the capital, what Simla was to Calcutta when the latter was capital of India.

The Dutch plan of defence was to fight delaying actions on the vulnerable north coast and, in particular, to hold the naval base at Sourabaya on the east as long as possible, and to concentrate the main part of the garrison for the defence of the mountain passes leading to Bandoeng. Here was established an important arsenal and supplies for a long siege. The mountain passes leading to the plateau were heavily fortified, the railway and road bridges mined, and every possible step taken to make this position as strong as possible. At all the likely landing-places on the north shore minefields were laid, wire entanglements put in position, tank traps dug, and coastal batteries mounted. Mobile striking forces, fully mechanized, were concentrated at strategical points in the interior, ready to counter-attack any hostile forces which might gain a footing on the beaches. The Dutch army was well trained and well equipped and was reinforced with British, Australian and American troops. Before the invasion General Wavell had handed over his command of the allied forces to the Dutch Government and returned to India to assume his post of Commander-in-Chief with Burma under his command. The allied unity of command in the Pacific under the English General with a high-ranking American air force officer and the Dutch Admiral and his staff had never properly got into action. For one thing the attempt was made to operate it from headquarters in Palembang. The truth is that General Wavell never had any margin of forces to utilize. General Hein ter Poorten now assumed command of the allied forces in Java.

One weakness of the Dutch position was lack of aircraft and especially fighters. When the invasion began there were less than two hundred aeroplanes for the defence of an island as large as England.

Some British and American aeroplanes had arrived, but very late in the day. There was hardly time to uncrate them and get them ready for service. The Dutch had ordered and paid cash for a large number of American aeroplanes before the outbreak of the war in the Pacific. Only a fraction of these were delivered. The worst feature of the situation was, however, the absence of sufficient allied naval support. As will presently be seen, the small Dutch navy, strengthened by one American and two British cruisers, with destroyers and some submarines, was too weak to drive off the attackers in the element where they should have been countered—the high seas. Nor were there enough long-range bombers and torpedo-carrying aircraft to make up for the lack of warships. To hold Java, the last stronghold of the democracies in the west Pacific, an allied fleet capable of meeting the Japanese navy on something like equal terms should have been sent. It was nearly three months since the fateful attack on the American Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbour, and the best that can be said was that the American navy had taken a long time to recover. There is evidence, also, of indecision in high places. The men responsible for the higher strategy could not make up their minds whether to defend Java or concentrate on holding Australia. When General Wavell returned to India he handed over the command of the British troops in Java to Major-General H. D. W. Sitwell, M.C., aged forty-five, and one of the younger generals of the British Army. General Sitwell, who had joined the Royal Artillery in September 1914 and served right through the first World War, had reached the substantive rank of major in 1939 and was serving as a general staff officer with the rank of acting lieutenant-colonel.

As soon as the movements of the invading armada were reported, the allied naval forces of cruisers and destroyers under the Dutch Admiral Doorman, sailed from Sourabaya and sighted the enemy fleet on the afternoon of 27 February. The allied force consisted of the 8-inch gun heavy cruisers *Exeter* (British), and *Houston* (U.S.A.); the 6-inch gun light cruisers *Perth* (Australian), *de Ruyter*, and *Java* (Dutch); the destroyers *Jupiter*, *Electra*, and *Encounter* (British); and *Kortenaer* (Dutch). The Japanese force first engaged consisted of at least 2 heavy cruisers and a number of light cruisers with 13 destroyers. The total enemy concentration, as reported officially by the Dutch Government, was 14 cruisers, 6 aircraft-carriers, 55 destroyers, and 25 submarines.

The Japanese fleet at the opening of hostilities included 17 heavy cruisers, 5 of them just completed, and 20 light cruisers. Despite losses already referred to the enemy were in a position to concentrate an overwhelming force; and they knew the allied strength and weakness through air reconnaissance.

The allied tactics were to avoid close action with the escorting warships and to do as much damage as possible to the transports. The Japanese, in view of their superior naval strength, had apparently

not expected to be attacked during daylight hours. Their submarines accordingly had been placed in position to guard the area which the Japanese Admiral expected to reach by nightfall. The daylight action opened at 4.14 p.m. on 27 February at very long range, about twelve miles, and though considerable damage was done to the enemy warships, the weight of metal was against the Allies and they could not press home their attack. Nevertheless, some seventeen transports were sunk or damaged, and ten Japanese warships hit in the series of day and night actions which followed. H.M.S. *Exeter*, of River Plate fame, was hit in the boiler room early in the daylight action and had to leave the fighting-line with her speed reduced by half. A large Japanese cruiser of the *Mogami* class of 8,500 tons, armed with fifteen 6-inch guns, was set on fire and forced out of the line, as was an 8-inch gun heavy cruiser. A third Japanese heavy cruiser was sunk. In the daylight cruiser actions, allied gunnery was better than that of their opponents and, given anything like equality of force, a victory would have resulted.

During destroyer attacks by the Japanese at least three of their destroyers were hit hard and fell out of the line, either burning or sinking. The only allied warship hit by torpedo was the Dutch destroyer, which sank. In counter-attacking the Japanese destroyers H.M.S. *Electra*, torpedo-boat destroyer, was sunk by gunfire.<sup>1</sup> Although reinforcements of Japanese warships arrived, the allied squadron with the loss of the two destroyers, forced about half the transports and their escorting warships to retreat to the north and only about forty were able to continue their voyage and reach the north coast of Java on the night of 27-28 February. The daylight action on 27 February had gone in favour of the Allies. Having regrouped his forces, Admiral Doorman made his second attempt at interception under cover of darkness. This time the Japanese tactic of stationing a line of submarines on the surface was successful. Just as they had got into gun range of the opposing fleet the allied ships reached the line of submarines and the Dutch light cruisers *de Ruyter* and *Java*, as well as the British destroyer *Jupiter*, were sunk as the result of torpedo hits. The Allies were now in a difficult situation and with little possibility of further effective naval action. As the invaders reached the shore of Java a Dutch motor torpedo-boat made a successful attack on a number of Japanese destroyers, sinking the flotilla leader.<sup>2</sup>

The landings on the night of 28 February and the morning of 1 March were made at three points, and in each case on bays or beaches, the fortified harbours being avoided. In the course of a week the

<sup>1</sup> H.M.S. *Electra* was disabled after heavily damaging the leader of three heavy enemy destroyers; 54 survivors were rescued by an American submarine and safely landed in Australia.

<sup>2</sup> For official communique of 14 March issued by the British Board of Admiralty, see Appendix II. This gives what information had then been received about the fate of the surviving allied warships. They all went down fighting against heavy odds.



enemy managed to land about 100,000 soldiers and numbers of armoured cars and 10-ton tanks. They were heavily bombed from the air and lost at least 10,000 men with much of their equipment. The three landings were made at Bantam, almost in the extreme west of Java; at Indramaya, east of Batavia; and at Rembang, thirty-five miles from the important oil-field of Tjapoe. The first two landings threatened the capital, Batavia. There was fierce resistance from the light forces guarding the coasts at each of these places and much damage was done by air attack. One of the Japanese warships supporting the landing party at Indramaya received four hits with heavy bombs and blew up. A direct hit was scored on a troop transport of 6,000 tons which was set heavily on fire, and five direct hits were scored on other transports and on a cruiser. A large oil tanker was sunk by a Dutch submarine off Rembang. The Bantam landing was opposed by the Dutch destroyer *Evertsen* which engaged two Japanese cruisers in the Sunda Strait. After a most gallant fight she was practically shot to pieces and beached in a sinking condition. At least forty of the invasion barges laden with troops and tanks were sunk by air attack. The Rembang landing was obviously aimed in the first place at the capture of the Tjapoe oil-field thirty-five miles away along the railway line. Taking no chances, the Dutch immediately blew up the oil refineries and destroyed the wells and all installations as they had in the case of their other oil-fields. This field produced ten per cent of the total output of petroleum in the Dutch East Indies and was the last producing field left in allied hands nearer than Burma.

As soon as the Japanese had effected a foothold at the three landing-places, they sent out large numbers of armed motor-cyclists and soldiers on pedal cycles to fan out in every direction and to secure as much territory as possible. These light, rapidly moving forces, supported by clouds of skirmishers, made infiltrations varying from twenty to forty miles in the first two days. The Dutch dealt with this situation as best they could, but they had a six-hundred-mile front to defend and were expecting additional landings at any time. The only important local success was by a mixed Dutch and British force which attacked the head of the invading force that had been landed at Idramayo and which had penetrated as far as Soebang in some force. Here the Japanese, contrary to their usual practice, were more concentrated and thicker on the ground, and after a sharp engagement they were driven back some miles. On 4 March Admiral Helfrich was replaced in command of all the naval forces by acting Rear-Admiral J. J. A. van Staveren, the fifty-three-year-old chief of the Dutch Naval Staff. On 3 March there were new landings by the enemy at the positions held by their troops. The only chance of saving Java, in all the circumstances, would have been if the counter-attacks could have driven the original three invading armies back into the sea. The reasons for the failure to do this will be explained, but it is right to note at once that there was no lack of courage and

initiative on the part of the defenders. The Dutch, British, and American troops all fought with the greatest gallantry and stubbornness. The few British Hurricanes and American Tomahawk fighters available fought continuously not only to deter the raiding squadrons of Japanese bombers, but in machine-gunning the attacking infantry wherever they could be located. With the new landings the Japanese air force, which had been comparatively quiescent since the original invasion, began to reappear in ever-growing force. In the next forty-eight hours, thanks largely to a series of heavy bombing attacks on the airfields and the capture of allied landing-grounds by the enemy infantry, the invaders acquired a working command of the air. Thenceforward they were able to dive-bomb and machine-gun the defending ground forces with impunity. On this same day, 3 March, the Dutch seat of government was moved from Batavia to Bandoeng. Military objectives in Batavia were destroyed and the Dutch entered the great city, port, and centre of commerce two days later. With the possession of Batavia's fine harbour, the invaders were now facilitated in the landing of troops and heavy equipment and artillery. Among the important airfields captured by the invader was the aerodrome at Kalidjati, within close flying range of Bandoeng. It was taken by a tank column after two hours' fierce fighting. Despite aerial counter-attacks which the few surviving allied aeroplanes made on the Japanese air force, the invaders were able to use it almost at once. By 7 March, or just over a week after the first landings, the island had been cut in two by a successful Japanese advance, Sourabaya naval base isolated, and most of the northern coastal plain in Japanese hands. Except for garrisons at Sourabaya and other strong points, the main Dutch forces began their retreat to the mountain stronghold of Bandoeng, there to make their final stand. By 8 March all communications by cable, telephone, and radio between Java and the Allies were interrupted.

The gallant Dutch had waited in vain for sufficient reinforcements to prevent the loss of this key position and the very centre of their eastern colonial system. The invasion of Java should have been prevented by sea action. The necessary reinforcements were not forthcoming. Strong air forces should have been sent, but whatever the intention of the Pacific Council in London, or the combined General Staff in Washington, only small numbers arrived. The British and American troops sent were negligible in number and some of the British troops were those evacuated from Singapore and afterwards from Sumatra. When their aeroplanes were lost, or put out of action on the ground, the surviving British pilots and ground staffs were formed into military units and did their duty. The absence of fighter support forced the withdrawal of the long-range bombers, including the American flying fortresses, to Australia. The Dutch regular forces available only numbered some 50,000, of whom 20,000 were Dutch; 30,000 militia, or Home Guard, had been enrolled for local defence.

Conscription had been introduced for the Javanese natives, but had only been in operation for about two years. Few reserves, therefore, had been trained, and there were not enough weapons available to arm more. Great sums of money, much care and thought, and immense labour had been spent on the defences. Why, then, was so much of Java overrun in so short a time? The Indonesian inhabitants were faithful and loyal, and there was practically no fifth column. The Dutch defenders were acclimatized, knew the country, and were determined to fight to the end. The explanation is to be found in the new technique of land fighting developed by the Japanese in this war. It was as novel as the tactics employed by the Germans in the use of their Panzer divisions in the battles of France and the Low Countries. These methods were highly successful in Malaya and Burma. They were not so successful in China and they were only partially successful in the Philippines. The new technique consisted in the employment of great masses of infantry trained to act independently or in groups of not more than twenty. With special light equipment and the minimum of rations, these fighters were highly trained in what I may describe as skirmishing in mass. It was as if in the old frontier fighting against the Indians in North America in the pioneering days the Indians had been armed with the most modern and efficient weapons and had gone into action in vast numbers. As soon as the Japanese infantry made good a landing, as in the islands of the Dutch East Indies, or had crossed a frontier as in the fighting in Malaya and Burma, and met any opposition, they immediately spread out in all directions like a vast yellow stain. Making use of every piece of cover and advancing always in very open order they would gradually creep forward, shooting and sniping as they went, and always seeking to get round a flank or infiltrate to the rear of the defenders. In Java they avoided the roads altogether except for their advanced clouds of bicyclists and made their way by creeping through the paddy fields or plantations or any patches of jungle they could find. In the swamps and rivers they would lie submerged until an opportunity came to shoot. They would advance at night and their whole method has been described as being like the march of a swarm of ants, except that instead of moving in masses or in close formation like the insects they spread themselves out in every direction. They were apparently indifferent to casualties; or at least their High Command was. These advancing swarms had no commissariat or medical services, no field kitchens or forward dressing-stations, and they were independent of the ordinary means of transport used by the present-day mechanized armies. These swarms of skirmishers were followed by others with portable wireless apparatus, and for artillery they relied on light mortars carried by hand or on the backs of pack animals. Only a few marksmen had rifles and the usual weapons were tommy-guns and short swords. These tactics were assisted by a certain number of officers or non-commissioned officers who had made

a close study of the country, or by Japanese nationals resident in the country, and this was particularly the case in Malaya. When they had air-predominance as in Malaya and after the first few days in Java, the infantry received much help from their air force, with whom good liaison was established; but in Burma they made the spectacular marches already described without command of the air.

In these circumstances it was impossible for the defenders in any of the campaigns to form anything in the nature of a front. In all the campaigns described the defending numbers were not sufficient to hold a continuous line in any case. If, as in Java, they held a series of strong points, the clouds of skirmishers worked their way round them. There were no pitched battles in the accepted sense of the term. If the defenders counter-attacked in strength the skirmishers dispersed and let them pass through, concentrating again in their rear. They were adepts at ambushes and surprise attacks and, thanks to each soldier being self-supporting in the way of supplies, their mobility was remarkable.

How can this new technique of land fighting be countered? The swarm of human ants must be fought by another swarm of human ants; in other words numbers must be met by numbers and training by training. The reason why the Japanese cloud of skirmishers did not succeed in China was because they were met by numerically equal or superior masses and they were fighting in a country where every man's hand was against them. The Javanese were against the Japanese, but they were not armed or prepared to resist them. Until the Allies have organized, armed and trained in tropical fighting great bodies of troops; until, in other words, they have the land power organized for this new method of fighting, their best way of stopping further Japanese encroachments will be at sea; and whether this sea power is exercised by men-of-war, or in the air over the sea, or by a combination of both, does not matter. The human ants to cross the sea must be carried in heavily laden troop transports. These troop transports are helpless in face of superior force whether on the sea or in the air. As it was, on land this new technique took the British, the Dutch and the Americans by surprise. It would have surprised any other European troops. Germans and Russians would have been taken at an equal disadvantage. European soldiers, and amongst these I include the Americans, have been trained in a certain form of fighting. They are used to certain equipment and they require good food and other amenities. The British-Indian and the Indonesians troops in the Dutch colonies had been trained by the same methods as their European comrades. The officers of the Indian battalions fighting in Burma were convinced that if they had adopted this new technique for fighting in the tropics in time and had given their men the right training, they would have been more than a match for the Japanese. I believe that British and Dominion troops, and certainly the Australians, if trained *from the beginning* as massed

skirmishers, could fight in this way better than the Japanese; but it would have to be from the beginning. All the old methods of infantry drill and field training would have to be scrapped. Numbers are needed, and the will to accept casualties for the sake of victory.

This new technique of using massed skirmishers for widespread infiltration purposes is most suitable for the offensive. Against troops committed to the defensive, yet holding their lines weakly as were the British in Malaya, in Burma, and the Dutch, perforce, in Java, they have their maximum effect. Where they meet a tough core of resistance on lines short enough to be held strongly, as in the attacks on the Bataan Peninsula, in the Philippines, against General MacArthur's army, they can fail completely. One way of defeating them is to take the initiative and carry the offensive against the Japanese. Even so, we have to learn from these methods; but it would be foolish to copy them slavishly. The mass use of parachutists, for example, would be a method peculiarly suited to the British temperament; until he comes under the 'barrack square' influence the young Englishman, Scotsman, Welshman, and not less the Irishman, usually shows great power of initiative. This is proved by the performance of the air fighters.

Japanese air supremacy and, later, absolute monopoly was obtained in Java by concentrating powerful squadrons of bombers, well protected by fighters, on the captured aerodromes in the south-east of Sumatra and on Bali island, and by the use of aeroplane-carriers at sea; and, as regards the long-range bombers, by using the captured aerodromes in the south of Borneo and the south of the Celebes. Once these concentrations had been made, a systematic programme of bombing the Dutch aerodromes and landing-grounds was carried out. These were either made unusable, or the aeroplanes on them destroyed on the ground. Having achieved this air supremacy, the Japanese bombing squadrons then proceeded to destroy such ports as they did not wish to use themselves, and especially the port of Tjilatjap on the south coast. This was the best port on the sheltered side of Java, and communicated by road and railway to Sourabaya in the east and to Bandoeng in the west. The destruction of this port made it impossible for reinforcements to be landed, or for the defending troops to be evacuated; not that the Dutch commanders had any intention of leaving the stricken field. They had sworn to defend Java to the last.

So complete was the monopoly of the air by the invaders in the later stages of the battle that the only way the troops of the defenders could concentrate or advance for their counter-attacks was by night. The first break through of the Bandoeng defences was on 7 March on the north side of the volcano of Tangkuban Prah. Sourabaya was isolated and under long-range artillery fire. With command of both the air and the sea, the Japanese were able to put ashore reinforcements, heavy artillery and large tanks to an extent only limited by their available sea transport. The Dutch official calculation was

## THE BATTLE OF JAVA

that at least ten divisions of the enemy, or 200,000 men, were landed in about ten days. The scale of this overseas invasion overshadowed even the great expedition sent for the subjection of the Philippines. On the day when the last remaining Dutch radio station in Java sent its farewell message, before being blown up by the Dutch themselves, the first large American convoy arrived from the United States by way of Samoa and the Fiji Islands, at Australian ports. The transports carried fully equipped divisions and the latest types of aeroplanes, tanks, anti-aircraft and anti-tank artillery, and all the paraphernalia of modern war. It was just a month too late. Other great convoys were on the way. On this same day, also, the Japanese made their first serious landings on the coast of New Guinea, four hundred miles from the Australian mainland. On 17 March General Douglas MacArthur arrived in Australia to take command of the combined forces of the Allies.

## EPILOGUE

THE causes of the remarkable success of the Japanese in the opening stages of the war in the Pacific go deep. They fought four nations, three of them very large and potentially powerful. These three, the United States of America, the British Empire and China, when armed, organized and deployed, would have far greater strength than the 80,000,000 Japanese in their circumscribed territories. The fourth nation, the Dutch, were prepared and mobilized so far as their limited resources allowed. The causes of the Allied débâcle were to be found not only in the preparedness, efficiency and recklessness of the aggressors. Local Japanese strength triumphed over local allied weakness. I have dwelt on the failure to organize in their own defence the great masses of the Asiatics in the attacked territories. This process of enlisting the local manhood had begun in Java, but had not had time to take great effect. The process had also begun in the Philippines, and if the invasion there had been delayed for a few years a great national army of Filipinos could have been mobilized for both defence and attack.

There was a more subtle reason for the initial defeats. The British leaders had lost, for the time being, the spirit of attack. These leaders were politicians and certain high-ranking staff officers. The whole history of warfare has shown the fatal results of relying primarily on a defensive strategy. The malady of what I may call the defensive mind was contracted from the French. There it was called the mentality of the Maginot Line. The French army, once imbued with a traditional offensive spirit, had suffered heavy casualties in the war of 1914-18. With a falling birthrate and too much love of security and comfort, the great majority of the French were reluctant to go to war except in the very last resort; many of them, and these not the least influential, were for peace under any conditions whatsoever—even the peace of servitude. The desire to avoid the horrors and bestialities of war is understandable; but in the Europe of 1933 onwards too little willingness to fight for great causes was fatal. The policy of appeasement, culminating in the so-called settlement at Munich, had a most damaging effect on the morale and national spirit of the French and British nations, and also on the morale of their natural allies; including the mighty United States of America. When war came those responsible for the conduct of the campaign in London and Paris proved utterly unworthy of their responsibilities. They allowed their Polish allies, who were willing to fight, and were fighting hard, to be overrun without any serious attempt to divert or lessen the German pressure. A great French army, supported by certain well-trained British divisions and a fine British air force, remained quiescent behind the fixed fortifications while the great bulk of the

German army was engaged in the first great example of a blitzkrieg against the unhappy Poles. The French had magnificent heavy tanks, ample heavy artillery, and, together with the British, disposed of splendid infantry, if properly led. The corresponding fortifications on the German side were far weaker and incomplete; responsible German staff officers have since admitted that a large-scale offensive against the West Wall (Siegfried Line) would probably have succeeded. No second fighting front was created. A few skirmishes and patrol activities, a feint against Saarbrücken, were the only indications that Britain and France were at war with a Germany then engaged in the destruction of Poland. The whole of the Luftwaffe was concentrated against the Poles, and while the Germans were launching their devastating air raids on Warsaw, Berlin and all the other German cities were left in complete peace.

The British Press is sometimes criticized. One reason, however, why the British nation did not follow the example of France more closely was that the British newspapers successfully resisted all attempts at muzzling. Newspaper proprietors and journalists are patriots, and in this war have not only interpreted, but have led public opinion on the right lines. And public opinion has on the whole remained sound.

It is unnecessary to recapitulate all the events leading to the fall of France. Thereafter, except at sea, the British were condemned to a defensive strategy until 22 June 1941. At dawn on that day the Germans launched their attack on Russia, and nearly reached the gates of Moscow by the following December. In those five and a half months there raged on the plains of Russia the greatest battles in the whole of human history. The numbers engaged, the wealth of the material employed, and the fierceness of the fighting, had not been equalled or approached in any previous war. Every consideration of prudence and honour pointed to the need for a large-scale diversion in the west of Europe. Once more the strategy of the passive defence prevailed in London. The German High Command had counted on destroying the Russian military machine, and they were not very far from success. Apart from air activity, with the known limitations of air warfare unsupported by parallel action on land or on sea, and some desert warfare in North Africa, no serious effort was made to strike at the main enemy where he was weakest. The numbers employed in the Libyan campaign on both sides were limited by supply difficulties. About a tenth of the army of the Middle East in the autumn of 1941 could be used in Libya. The remainder waited to be attacked through the Caucasus or Turkey. The Greek campaign was defensive in origin. The British and Imperial forces were sent to Greece after the Germans had seized the initiative. The same held good of Norway.

The Germans were allowed to leave the great coastline from the north of Norway to the Spanish frontier, 2,000 miles of the vulnerable shores of western Europe, thinly guarded, and to throw the great bulk of their forces of all arms, together with their Rumanian, Hungarian,



Slovakian and Finnish auxiliaries, against the Russians. Whatever excuses were put forward at the time or soon afterwards for this gigantic failure to make the Germans fight on two fronts, the historian of the future will be hard put to it to discover valid apologies. The favourite contemporary excuse was the shortage of merchant shipping. Shipping was bound to be short if we made our main effort from Egypt, 12,000 miles by sea round the Cape of Good Hope from the home supply bases. The most economical use of shipping was on a shuttle service to the coast of Europe, twenty to a hundred miles away.

This over-caution, this over-emphasis on defensive tactics, this eulogizing of successful evacuations of fighting armies after their defeat in the field, is another form of defeatism. It is the British manifestation of the disease which struck down France. It spread downwards from the War Cabinet room and affected the High Command on the field of battle. Probably the worst and most spectacular symptom of the evil was the campaign in Malaya and the surrender of Singapore Island. And the disease infected the Americans, too. Its American symptoms were the stationing of the Pacific Fleet in the Hawaiian Islands in the belief that it would be out of danger, instead of sending it to the China Sea when the Japanese designs manifested themselves. Another symptom was the failure to reinforce Java and the alternative adopted of creating another defensive front or Maginot Line in Australia. Yet another symptom, on the British side, was the failure to send an attacking army from India to fight the Japanese invaders, then in comparatively weak force in the province of Tenasserim, as the best way of defending Burma and India. A fatal school of thought had control of, and poisoned the whole of, the allied strategy. This school believed that war could be won cheaply and without taking risks; that it could be won by long-distance blockade and long-distance bombing; that it was safer to hold defended positions everywhere instead of concentrating the available forces for attack, in overwhelming strength, somewhere; that there was no other way than always to leave the initiative to the enemy and try to ward off strokes that might be coming. The strategy was that of Mr. Micawber—always waiting for something to turn up. A German threat of invasion could turn the British Isles into a vast internment camp. Here was not only a strong British army, but a Canadian army and Poles and Czechs, all fighting men, presently to be reinforced by large numbers of picked American troops.

Another symptom was the strategy of preparing always to attack next year and never this year; to wait until everything was ready down to the last detail and all the equipment absolutely perfect. Generals who have caught this disease are never ready, their equipment is never perfect, they will always desire to wait for more tanks or more aeroplanes or for a type of weapon which does not exist; and the disease spreads. Nations can acquire a tradition of defeat, and then their further existence as free States is on sufferance. The rolling

oratory, the stately periods which adjure us to fight in our own streets, on our own beaches, in our own hills, instead of on the enemy's beaches, the enemy's streets, and the enemy's hills, are symptomatic of an over-emphasis on passive defence and safety first, which, unless eliminated, will have only one ending—catastrophe. Fortunately, the spell was broken by March 1942; the hypnotized giant in the British race began to stir.

The Briton remains a magnificent fighting man if he is encouraged to fight. That has been proved consistently in the Second World War by the cold courage of British seamen and the initiative, dash and valour of British airmen. It was shown again and again by British soldiers in certain actions, of which Calais and the Sittang River are only two examples. The raw material is there: it needs only a master hand to shape it into an irresistible weapon.

The Japanese will be defeated in the Pacific by a northern offensive from Australia and a southern offensive from the mainland of Asia. The great mass of Australia will provide the vast base of operations for the reconquest of the lost lands. In the north is a greater land mass geographically and, presently, spiritually united. Siberia, India and China knit together and organized form an impenetrable barrier against further Japanese advances. Their mighty populations, when roused and mobilized for war, will put *finis* to Japanese dreams of the overlordship of Asia. Siberia is close to Alaska, and is thence linked by Canada to the United States of America. The combined forces can be organized and marshalled for a great counter-attack on the very heart of Japan. That would make an even quicker end of the business than trying to win back the fringes of Asia and the outlying islands. Asia for the Asiatics will, thereafter, become a reality, though not in the Japanese sense of the words. The victors on the mainland of Asia will be the Indians, the Chinese and the Russians. All are peoples wedded to peaceful ideals, the Chinese especially. The Indians, the Chinese and the Russians have given much to religion, to civilization, to the arts and to learning. We need not fear a spiritual leadership of Asia by such Asiatics, for Russia is of Asia as well as of Europe.

Those British and other European influences which are good, as many of them are, such as the spirit of democracy, belief in elementary justice, human rights and the common decencies, will remain. The other influences with less ethical foundation, especially those emanating from Threadneedle Street and Wall Street, from Krupps and the Comité des Forges, have gone already. They will never return to Asia, and that will be for the benefit of humanity.

## APPENDIX I

### A SHORT CHRONOLOGY OF CHINESE HISTORY

B C	
3000- 2000	Legendary Era
1122	Downfall of Shang dynasty Founding of Chou dynasty
722	Date at which the <i>Ch'un Chiu</i> (Spring and Autumn Annals) begins.
551- 479	Confucius born in Lu (Shantung)
221	Ch'in Shih Huang (first Emperor of Ch'in), in the 26th year of his reign began to use the title Emperor Founding of Han Dynasty
140	Confucianism first exalted
130	South West Barbarians open communication with China.
122	Chang Ch'ien sent to explore the western regions
A D	
68	Buddhism imported into China
220	End of Han Dynasty
220- 222	Beginning of Three Kingdoms period.
220- 589	China under small dynasties, some of 'Barbarian' origin.
589	China unified under the Sui Dynasty
618- 907	T'ang Dynasty
618- 755	Era of great prosperity and cultural progress
755- 761	Rebellions and disturbances
755- 907	Decline of T'ang
907- 960	Five dynasties period—chaos
953	The 'Nine Classics' printed
960- 1278	Sung Dynasty
1069	The New reform under Wang An-shih.
1271	Marco Polo sailed east
1278- 1368	Mongol Yuan Dynasty
1368- 1644	China reunited under the Chinese M'ing Dynasty
1516	Portuguese reached Canton.
1557	Portuguese acquire Macao
1575	Spaniards reach Canton.
1580	M. Ricci arrived Macao
1604	Dutch reach Canton
1636	English reach Canton.
1644- 1911	Ch'ing Dynasty (Manchu)

- 1680 East India Co. began to trade with China.
- 1757 Foreign trade confined to Canton.
- 1782 Canton co-hong established.
- 1784 Americans reach Canton.
- 1793 Lord Macartney's embassy to Peking.
- 1816 Lord Amherst's embassy to Peking.
- 1834 Abolition of East India Co. trade monopoly.
- 1839 War between China and England *re* disputes, various, including opium, status of foreigners, etc.
- 1842 Opium war and Treaty of Nanking. Hongkong ceded to England.
- 1850-1864 } Tai-p'ing rebellion.
- 1858 Treaty of Tientsin.
- 1860 Treaty of Peking.
- 1879 Japan took Loochoo Islands—beginning of loss of dependencies.
- 1889 K'ang Yu-wei's proposed reforms.
- 1894 End of Sino-Japanese War. (*Re* Korea.)
- 1896 Sun Yat-sen and his friends began the revolt in Canton.
- 1901 Boxer Treaty with eight Powers.
- 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance.
- 1904-1905 } Russo-Japanese War. Russia cedes half Saghalien Island, Liaotung leased territory (Port Arthur) and railways in South Manchuria.
- 1910 Japan annexes Korea.
- 1911 Manchu dynasty falls. Chinese Republic established.
- 1915 Japan presents China with the twenty-one demands.
- 1922 Anglo-Japanese Alliance abrogated. Washington Naval Treaty. Nine-Power Treaty and Four-Power Pact concluded (guaranteeing integrity of China).
- 1923 Great Japanese earthquake.
- 1926-1928 } National Revolution in China. British concession at Hankow restored to China (1927). Nationalist Government formed in Nanking (1927). Chang Tso-lin, Manchurian War Lord, dies (1928).
- 1929 Manchuria acknowledges authority of Nanking.
- 1931 Japanese occupied Mukden on 18 September. Sino-Japanese clash in Tientsin and flight of Mr. Henry P'u to Manchuria.
- 1932 Japan gains control of Manchuria and establishes Mr. Henry P'u as Chief Executive of the new independent State of Manchukuo. Sino-Japanese fighting in Shanghai. League Commission visits Far East and issues Report condemning Japan's actions.
- 1933 League Assembly unanimously (Siam abstaining) confirms Commission's Report and Japan withdraws from the League. Japanese occupy Shanhaikwan and Jehol Province, and concludes Tangku Truce, 'demilitarizing' 5,000 square miles in North China, withdrawing her troops to north of the Great Wall.
- 1934 Mr. Henry P'u becomes Emperor of Kang-Teh. Japan denounces Washington Naval Treaty.
- 1935 Japanese invade south of the Great Wall, finally forcing Nanking to accept abolition of Peking Political Council and Kuomintang organizations (for anti-Japanese activities), and to withdrawal of Nanking's forces from Peking and Tientsin areas. Ch'char-Hoeph (formerly Chihli) Autonomous Political Council inaugurated with General Sung Chieh-yuan as chairman (18 December).
- 1936 General Chiang Kai-shek 'detained' at Sianfu by troops commanded by Chang Hsueh-liang, on 12 December. Released on 25 December. Agreements made which were subsequently embodied in policy of co-operation between the Kuomintang and the Communists.

- 1937 *July 8.* Beginning of second stage of Sino-Japanese War.  
*August 26.* Japanese fire on British Ambassador.  
*September 15.* Chinese Government appeals to League of Nations, invoking Articles 10, 11 and 17.  
*October 6.* Assembly passes resolution expressing 'moral support' for China, and recommending 'that members of the League should refrain from taking any steps which might have the effect of weakening China's power of resistance', and suggesting that Powers 'should consider how far individually they can extend aid to China'. Poland and Siam abstained from voting.  
*November 3.* Brussels Conference opens. Continues throughout month. Fails to mediate conflict.  
*December 13.* Fall of Nanking.
- 1938 *July-August.* Fighting between Soviet and Japanese troops on Korean-Soviet frontier.  
*October 12.* Japanese invasion of South China; landing at Bias Bay.  
*October 21.* Occupation of Canton.  
*October 25.* Fall of Hankow.  
*December.* Export Credits Guarantee Department gives £450,000 in export credits for China.
- 1939 *January 19.* British Note to Japan expressing 'grave anxiety' regarding Japan's policy in China.  
*February.* Japan occupies Hainan Island.  
*March 8.* Announcement of British grant of £5,000,000 for Chinese currency stabilization.  
*April.* Export credits of £3,000,000 granted by Export Credits Guarantee Department.  
*May.* Beginning of blockade of Tientsin.  
*July.* Craigie-Arita formula recognizing Japan's 'special requirements for safeguarding their own security and maintaining public order'.  
*August.* Japan, Germany and Italy sign Tripartite Pact.  
*October.* Outspoken speech of Ambassador Grew in Tokyo.
- 1940 *January.* Japanese Cabinet states conditions for establishment of Wang Ching-wei Government in Nanking.  
*March 30.* Formal establishment of Wang Ching-wei Government. Government denounced in Chungking, and seventy-seven officials of new Government officially outlawed.  
*April.* A Note denouncing Wang Ching-wei Government transmitted to all League Members at request of Chinese delegation.  
*June.* Blockade lifted in Tientsin.  
*July 8.* British Government accedes to Japan's request to close the Burma Road.  
*October 18.* Reopening of Burma Road.  
*November.* Japanese begin their evacuation of Kwangsi Province.  
*November 30.* Wang Ching-hui, Chinese Foreign Minister, stated in Chungking that recognition of Wang Ching-wei would be regarded as an unfriendly act.



E.N.A.

DUTCH TINOR

## APPENDIX II

### ADMIRALTY COMMUNIQUE OF 14 MARCH 1942 ON NAVAL OPERATIONS OFF JAVA:

"ALTHOUGH full information is not yet available, it is now possible to give some account, so far as particulars are at present to hand, of the events in the Java Sea on 27 February and subsequent days, during the Japanese invasion of Java.

"On the afternoon of Friday, 27 February, an Allied force, consisting of H.M.A.S. *Perth* (Captain H. M. L. Waller, D.S.O., R.A.N.), H.M.S. *Exeter* (Captain O. L. Gordon, M.V.O., R.N.), the United States cruiser *Houston*, and the Dutch cruisers *De Ruyter* and *Java*, was at sea north of Surabaya.

"The Allied cruisers were accompanied by the destroyers H.M.S. *Electra* (Commander C. W. May, R.N.), H.M.S. *Jupiter* (Lieut.-Commander J. V. J. T. Thew, R.N.), and H.M.S. *Encounter* (Lieut.-Commander E. V. St. J. Morgan, R.N.), and the Dutch destroyer *Kortenaer*.

"This force was under the sea command of Admiral Doorman, whose flag was flying in the *De Ruyter*. The whole naval force in the area was under the strategical control of Admiral Helfrich, of the Royal Netherlands Navy.

"At 4.14 p.m. on 27 February this Allied force made contact with a Japanese force about half-way between Bawean Island and Surabaya.

"The Japanese force consisted of at least two Nati class cruisers of 10,000 tons, armed with ten 8-in. guns, and a number of other cruisers. The Japanese cruisers had with them thirteen destroyers organised in two flotillas.

"Action was joined at extreme range. Almost at once one of the Japanese destroyer flotillas launched an attack, but this was driven off by the fire of the Allied cruisers, and one of the enemy destroyers was seen to be hit by shells from H.M.A.S. *Perth*.

"Soon afterwards the other Japanese destroyer flotilla delivered a torpedo attack.

"While action was being taken to avoid these torpedoes, H.M.S. *Exeter* was hit by an 8-in. shell in a boiler-room. This reduced her speed, and forced her to drop out of the line.

"Only one of the torpedoes launched in this attack took effect. This hit the Dutch destroyer *Kortenaer*, and she sank.

"The three British destroyers were ordered to counter-attack the Japanese destroyers, who were retiring under cover of a smoke-screen.

"Very little information is available about the result of this counter-attack. H.M.S. *Jupiter* reported seeing only two enemy destroyers, both of which she engaged with gunfire.

"H.M.S. *Electra* was not seen after she had disappeared into the smoke screen, and it is presumed that she was sunk.

"As soon as the Allied cruisers, except H.M.S. *Exeter*, who was unable to keep up, drew clear of the smoke, they again engaged the enemy, this time at shorter range.

"At forenoon on Sunday, 1 March, H.M.S. *Exeter* reported that she had sighted three enemy cruisers steering towards her. No further signals were received from H.M.S. *Exeter*, H.M.S. *Encounter*, or the U.S. destroyer *Pope*.

"The Dutch destroyer *Evertsen* encountered two Japanese cruisers in the Sunda Strait. She was damaged and was beached.

"The destroyer H.M.A.S. *Stronghold* (Lieut.-Commander G. R. Pretor-Pinney, R.N.) and the sloop H.M.S. *Tarra* (Lieut.-Commander R. W. Rankin, R.A.N.), are also missing, and must be considered lost.

"It has not been possible to form any estimate of the damage inflicted on the enemy by these ships during their last actions.

"All other Allied warships which were in Java waters are known to be safe, except for some small craft and auxiliaries about which information is not yet available.

"Next of kin of all known British casualties have been informed."



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